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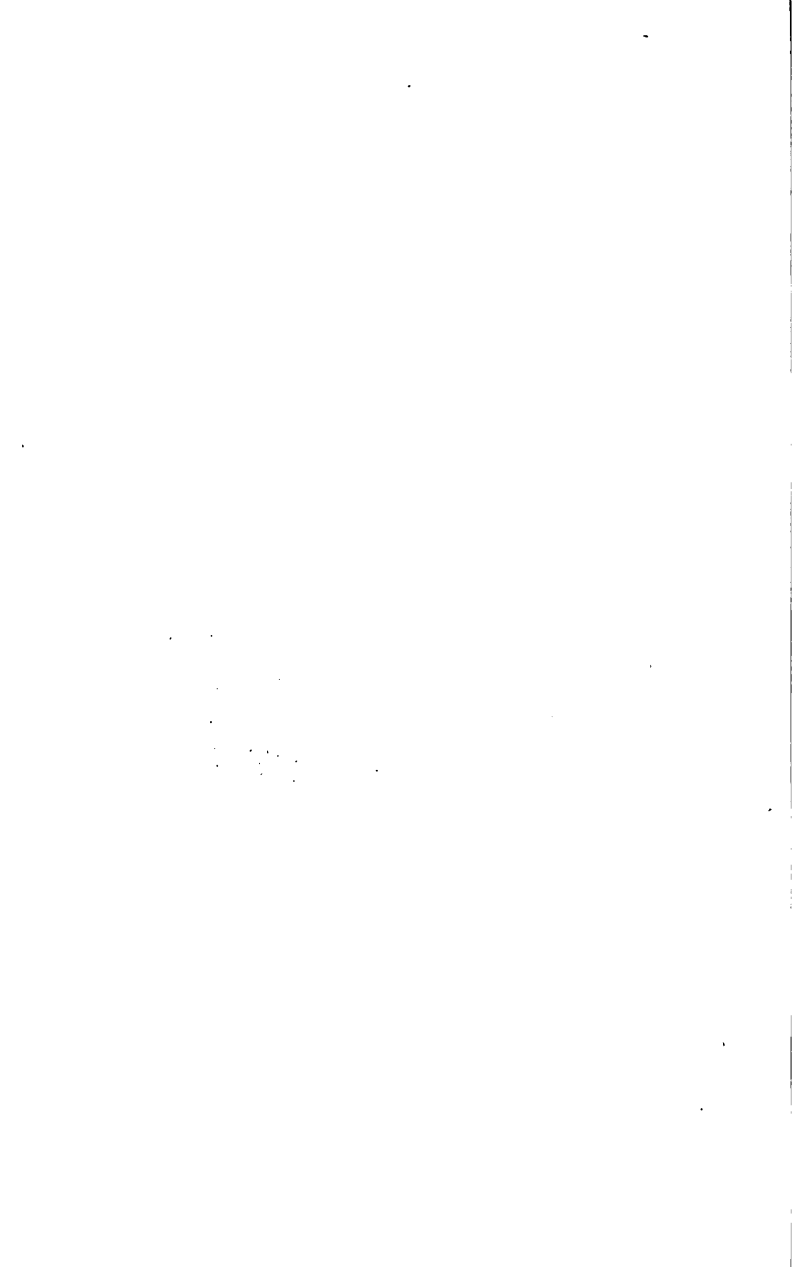




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# S K E T C H E S

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BY

A SAILOR;

OR,

THINGS OF EARTH AND THINGS OF HEAVEN.



BY

A COMMANDER IN THE NAVY.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.

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## PREFACE.

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“EVERY man to his station, and the cook to the fore-sheet,” is an old naval saying, and in homely language conveys a sound and useful lesson. Men, as a general rule, should adhere to the calling in which they have been instructed ; but there are exceptions to every rule.

The following sketches, partly founded on facts, are from the pen of a sailor, and as such may perhaps excite the curiosity of the reader. They were written for the author's children, with a view to direct their young minds to the all-important fact, that Religion is a practical affair of the deepest concern to all, and that there is no situation or circumstance of life that does not afford opportunities for bringing its lessons forcibly to mind.



On submitting the manuscript to the perusal of friends, it was suggested that it might possibly find favour with the general reader, and in that hope, it is now offered to the public.

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# SKETCHES BY A SAILOR.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE SHIPWRECK.

“ And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land.” — ACTS, xxvii. 44.

THE “ Intrepid ” was as fine a vessel of her class as ever swam the seas, and no better seaman, or more honest fellow, than Captain Robertson, ever trod a ship’s deck.

I was one of nine passengers that embarked in her at Calcutta, for England ; and from the hour of our sailing, almost, to the final catastrophe I purpose relating, fate seemed to dog our trackless path with relentless spite and malevolence.

Before we reached the British Channel we might have said with truth, that

“ Many a hard gale encountered had we,  
Strange climates, and all kinds of weather.”

Hardly was the anchor stowed, and sail made

on the ship, when old Æolus began to play his tricks, and continued to buffet us during the whole voyage.

A typhoon in the Bay of Bengal, the tail of a hurricane off Mauritius, a nor'-wester at the Cape, heavy squalls on the Line, half a gale of wind near the Western Isles, and a whole spout in the Bay of Biscay, were amongst the chief favours we had to thank him for; whilst calms and baffling winds were not wanting to complete our discomfort. But with a stanch and good sea-boat, a skilful captain, and active crew, we cared little for wind or weather, and "did not strain a rope-yarn," as Mr. Gillies, the mate, often informed us, during the whole of our battles with the elements, fierce as they undoubtedly were.

I'm not superstitious, not I; but it is certain we sailed on a Friday. Could that be the cause of our disasters? or were they owing to the presence of that odious black cat?

Our party in the cabin, besides the captain, mate, and surgeon, consisted of Mr., Mrs., and Miss ——;—no, I'll give no names, I will not stir up unpleasant recollections.

Mr. F. and his wife and sisters, then, let me call them. There were also Captain R., and his wife; Lieutenants L. and V., of the Bengal Native In-

fantry ; Mr. B., of Her Majesty's —th regiment ; and myself.

Next to obtaining an agreeable companion for the voyage of life, a set of agreeable fellow-voyagers, on a passage of some months' duration, is a blessing not to be lightly esteemed. I was very fortunate in this particular, and we could sing

“ Sigh not for summer flowers ;  
What though the dark cloud lowers ?  
Welcome, ye wintry showers,  
Our sunshine is within.”

In all our storms we could retire below and find cheerful, pleasant companions, to lighten our cares and beguile the tedious hours.

The constantly recurring excitement, indeed, of battling with the breeze had its charm for many of us, which was heightened by the fine and striking contrast exhibited between storm and calm ;—the ocean, at one time lashed to fury, its huge waves towering to the skies, raised far above the deck of our stout ship, and seeming every moment about to roll over her and overwhelm her in the great deep ; yet gently lifting her, as a tender mother would her child, and leaving her scathless amidst the clash and turmoil of the elements ;—the more distant waves seeming as though they would scale

heaven itself, like the Babylonish tower of old, and then, like it, arrested in their course, bursting into a crest of white froth, as in impotent rage and despair, and sinking amidst the mass of waters ; — anon a gust of wind, more furious than the rest, levelling for a moment the swelling surface of the angry ocean, and blending sea and sky in one confused sheet of foam and mist ; at another time the sea presenting one vast plain of glossy smoothness and deepest azure, and reflecting, as in a huge polished mirror, the hull, sails, and cordage of the vessel, as she rolled listlessly on its surface ; whilst, in place of “ clouds and thick darkness,” the sun shone brilliantly in its meridian splendour, without so much as a passing scud to dim its fiery rays.

In these circumstances I often repeated to myself those beautiful lines of a modern poet, —

“ The winds are all hushed, and the billows at rest,  
They sleep like the passions in infancy's breast,  
Till storms shall unchain them from out their deep caves,  
And break the repose of the soul and the waves.”

What, indeed, can be more typical of man's career, from the cradle to the grave, than the restless and ever-changing ocean? its gentle morning breeze, its mid-day gales and tempests, its evening lull, its night's deep calm?

But how far more beautiful than aught ever written by mere uninspired man—how strictly, literally true, the description given by the Royal Psalmist:—“They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters; these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For at his word the stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They are carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep; their soul melteth away because of the trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man; and are at their wits’ end. So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivereth them out of their distress. For he maketh the storm to cease; so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they are at rest; and so he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.”

Another phase of God’s “wonders in the deep” was also occasionally revealed to us in all its beauty and grandeur, when the still, die-away calm was rudely broken by the tornado squall,—when “the Lord also thundered out of heaven, and the Highest gave his thunder; hailstones and coals of fire;”—when “the clouds poured out waters, the air thundered, and His arrows went abroad;—when



“the voice of His thunder was heard round about,” and “the lightnings shone upon the ground;”—thus making us ever to understand that His “way is in the sea, and His paths in the great waters.”

Captain Robertson had been long accustomed to carry passengers in his vessel; and interest, as well as the promptings of a naturally kind disposition, caused him to study their comfort to the utmost, and devise means to cheat away the dull hours that will be found to hang more or less heavy on the hands of all people shut out from the pleasures and business of life, deprived of all their wonted occupations and amusements.

A couple of fiddles and a flageolet formed the entire band of the “Intrepid,” but this was found sufficient to mark time for the quadrille, polka, or valse, when a fine calm evening tempted his guests to join in the dance.

The marine chess-board, with its holes, into which the men were firmly fixed by a peg, thus defying the lurching and rolling of the ship, and enabling the players to continue their game regardless of wind or weather, was found a great resource to some, whilst a quiet party was often formed in the evening to play a rubber at whist.

For the rest, there was the usual sport afforded by the capture of the finny tribe, such at least as are in the habit of frequenting the surface-waters of the deep sea, and courting the dangerous acquaintance of man.

Now a shoal of porpoises would surround the vessel, and accompany her in her course, crossing and re-crossing her bows, as if in playful mockery of her tardy pace. Dangerous sport! they little reck of peril from that Long Tom Coffin, who, harpoon in hand, stands on the back-ropes, supporting himself by the dolphin-striker, which he half embraces, in act to hurl his barbed weapon at the first thoughtless creature that may venture within his range. They roll, they dart, they tumble, they leap from the water in the very wantonness of their mirth, grunting and puffing as from a lack of breath to continue their rapid progress. Suddenly an unlucky wretch rises near to the surface, within a few yards of the harpooner, and in an instant is transfixed by his iron, whilst his dark crimson blood discolours the pure wave. A glad shout re-echoes from the forecastle, a dozen willing hands seize the line attached to the instrument, and, quick as thought, the huge fish is hauled upon the deck, quivering

and writhing in its expiring agony, and staining the white planks with its gore.

A dying dolphin now exhibits its delicate, but evanescent, tints to the admiring spectator. His pitiful feelings are excited by its expiring struggles and its rare beauty. The fisherman plunges his knife into its belly, and lays its contents bare to view. What is that he is taking from the creature's stomach? A poor flying-fish! one of those beautiful little creatures which so arrested your attention by their graceful flight, as they fluttered, like swallows, over the face of the deep, tipping the crests of the waves with their delicate wings to enable them to continue their brief career; one of those little creatures which V—— ate with so much relish for his breakfast, comparing it to whiting for flavour and delicacy, and whose wings are now spread to-day against the foremast. Thus is each created thing made to be food for other, and all for man.

What stir and bustle is that I hear on deck? can it be some poor fellow overboard? No; I hear the mate calling to the steward to bring up a piece of pork: it must be a shark for whom this dainty morsel is required. Let us haste and see the fun.

A large fellow, by my conscience! ten feet long

if he is an inch! He is hungry, he snatches ravenously at every bit of oakum or bunch of shavings thrown to him. Hasten with the pork, and bait the hook with it; in his present mood he will hardly fail to bolt it in an instant.

The shark-hook, baited with four pounds of fat salt pork, is fastened to a stout rope, and thrown into the sea over the ship's stern. The shark approaches quickly, smells at it, and turns away. The man holding the rope now splashes the bait about in the water; again the shark is attracted towards it, nibbles at it, and turns again away. The bait is withdrawn from the water, and then thrown suddenly into it again. This time the brute can govern his appetite no longer; he darts swiftly at it, turns well nigh upon his back, and swallows the tempting prize, hook and all, in a moment. Now "the tug of war" commences. One good jerk, and the sharp hook has transfixed his jaw. In vain he strives to shake it from his mouth, in vain he endeavours to bite the chain which connects it with the rope. Sharp as are his triple rows of teeth, and powerful as are his jaws, he finds the task above his strength.

Now he dives beneath the surface of the water, now leaps madly from it. Give him line enough

and play him steadily; the violence of his own efforts will soon exhaust him.

Behold him now, with open mouth, into which the water pours freely, scarcely moving as he is dragged in the wake of the ship, his nose just above the wave, and almost drowned. Now, quick with the running noose, and slip it cleverly over his head and body, until it reaches the tail, then join it firmly.

It is done; now haul away and land the monster on deck. Keep clear of that huge tail; one blow from it would shiver your leg to pieces. Quick, an axe, there! that good blow has severed his tail, and he is now powerless. Drag him forward, and cut him in pieces for the pot as soon as you will, but carefully preserve the back-bone and jaws.

Alas! how many of us, like this poor shark, have fallen victims to our unruly appetites, lured by some tempting bait to our destruction!

The approach to the British Channel was marked with a new source of interest and amusement to the tired voyagers. Vessels were now daily seen, some, like ourselves, homeward bound — oh joyful destination, ever gladdening the sailor's heart — and converging from many distant points as they closed in upon the mouth of the

narrow sea; others starting on distant voyages, full of hope and assurance, like youth just entering on life, before a single squall has ruffled his shining path before him.

With some ships we exchanged numbers and signals, to others we merely showed our national colours.

That fine ship a-head of us will surely pass within hail. Ah! the captain is prepared to speak her. See, he stands on the rail, trumpet in hand. What is that they are putting over her side? I see, it is the log-board, with the longitude chalked upon it: welcome information at this critical point of our voyage, especially as we have not had an observation of sun or star for two days past, and the weather continues thick and cloudy, whilst the south-west gale bears us rapidly towards the land. What is written? give me the spy-glass. Nine degrees, twenty-nine minutes: good! we are abreast of Cape Clear at all events, and in the fair way of the Chaunel.

"What ship's that?" "The 'Nonsuch;' what are you?" "The 'Intrepid.'" Hardly is there time for such brief questions and answers when the vessels have passed out of earshot, and are pursuing their respective courses, probably never to meet again. How often does it happen that

voyagers meet on the wide ocean, hold short but familiar discourse together, and part with mutual good wishes, ignorant even of each other's names, and not prepared to recognise each other's faces if they met next day in a room ; but probably never to see each other again. These brief acquaintanceships are peculiar, I believe, to those who wander o'er the great deep.

But we are drawing near to the scene of our great and crowning disaster, and it is needful I should proceed with my narrative more in detail.

I have said Captain Robertson was a good seaman, and a good fellow—qualifications by no means inseparable ; but it not unfrequently happens that the possession of knowledge becomes a source of danger and mischief to us, from the self-confidence, self-conceit, and temerity it often engenders ; and this I have known again and again forcibly exemplified in maritime affairs.

It is, indeed, illustrative of the poet's meaning in the oft-quoted line,

“ A little learning is a dangerous thing ; ”

for perfect knowledge would enable us at all times to guide our steps aright. It is the igno-

rance that thinks itself wise that perpetually leads us into error, as

“Fools rush in, where angels fear to tread.”

Captain Robertson had been long at sea, and for many years in command of vessels. He prided himself, and justly perhaps, on his skill as a navigator. He had excellent nautical instruments, and his “landfalls” were frequently a source of astonishment to his passengers. If, indeed, he said land would be seen at such an hour, in such a direction, you might go to sleep until the time arrived, and awake with the pleasing certainty that you were near to your desired haven.

It was at 9h. 15m. A.M. that we had spoken the “Nonsuch.” The ship was kept on her course till noon; she was then hove to, and soundings carefully taken. Although we had been running for more than forty-eight hours without any celestial observation to correct our dead-reckoning, it was found that our longitude agreed within a few miles with that of the ship we had spoken; and now the lead and line confirmed our position. The captain smiled a smile of satisfaction, and rubbing his hands with pleasure, and partly, perhaps, to restore the impeded circulation caused by the chill December’s



blast, he gave orders, in a cheerful voice, to fill away the main-yard, haul aft the fore-sheets, and steer direct up Channel, which we were soon doing at the rate of ten and a half knots before the freshening gale.

All was mirth and jollity that day : it seemed as if no one could command the exuberance of his spirits. We "sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." It is true the dense mist and drizzling rain prevented our obtaining so much as a glimpse of fatherland ; but, irrespective of our blind faith in the captain's assurance that we were "just there,"—putting the point of a somewhat coarse forefinger upon the chart, about W.S.W. of the Scilly Isles, and covering an area of some sixty square miles with it,—we knew, by the altered colour of the water, and by the sea-birds hovering and screaming in our wake, that we must be near land ; whilst a sort of indescribable intuitive assurance was ours, that that land contained our friends, our homes, all most dear to us upon earth. But not a few there were who,—though their hearts then beat high with exultant hope, their brains were busy with bright pictures of the future, their tongues prated of how they would "take their ease, eat, drink, and be merry,"—were never permitted to set foot on the promised land.

Before the morrow's sun rose upon the world, heart, brain, and tongue were still and cold,—“five fathom deep” in ocean's bed. That night their souls were required of them.

All that day the gale continued, freshening as the sun declined,—for decline it did, though closely veiled from our sight. Darkness closed in upon us—the darkness of a December's night in the English Channel. Still we hurried on our way. What mattered it that one could not see his hand when held up before him? Throughout the day we could hardly see the jib-boom's end—too short a range of vision to have saved us from impending peril. The light burnt brightly in the binacle—our path was known—what needed we more?

Soon after midnight, the wind, hitherto blowing from S.W. to S.S.W., chopped suddenly in a squall to S.E., and blew a perfect hurricane.

So unexpected was the shift of wind, so blinding the rain, that no preparation was made for the occurrence, and the sails were caught aback. Luckily the vessel had rapid way on her at the time; the helm was put to starboard, and she paid quickly off before the wind.

The captain was on deck in an instant—he had not taken his clothes off, nor left the deck for five

minutes at a time since sunset—and gave immediate orders to take in the foresail, and brace the yards to the wind. But, in the dark and confusion, some lubber saved his shipmates that trouble, for, letting go the starboard fore-brace just as the wind caught the after leech of the sail; the yard flew forwards with great violence, snapped in the lee-quarter, and in an instant the sail was split into ribands, and fluttered in the storm.

The main-yard was now braced up, and the ship brought gradually to the wind; but, in less than ten minutes, a heavy gust blew the main-topsail out of the bolt-rope, and the vessel again fell off the wind with her head in the direction of the English shore; but as it was considered we had ample room to drift in that direction, no heed was taken of the circumstance, and all hands were set to work to clear away the wreck of the fore-yard and bend another main-topsail. In a little time, however, the ship rolling heavily in a cross and confused sea, the main-trysail was set; and she headed to the N.E., making little or no way through the water.

These operations were not performed without a loss of life which at any other time would have been regarded with much concern by all on board, but in the confusion and horror of that night

seemed to be hardly noticed. Two poor fellows, in attempting to secure the main-topsail, with a view to unbend it, were knocked off the lee yard-arm, fell overboard, and were seen no more.

When people are busy on a dark winter's night, in a gale of wind, strange as it may sound to a landsman's ear, time passes very swiftly. Thus, about four hours had elapsed from the moment of the wind shifting, when the look-out man forward cried sharply, "Breakers a-head!" an appalling sound under any circumstances, and particularly awful when heard in a crippled vessel, situated as we were.

The excitement of nearing the land, the violent motion of the vessel, as she staggered and rolled on her course in the early part of the night, and the noise and bustle on deck since the splitting of the sails, had banished sleep, I believe, from every eye. Few had retired to bed at all—none had done more than partially undress themselves,—so that the cry of the seaman pierced the ears of each passenger, even amidst the howling of the elements, and the uproar caused by officers giving directions on deck, and seamen calling from aloft to let go this or that rope, to hold on the other, &c. &c.

One impulse seemed to animate each indi-

vidual at that dread sound—a blind instinct of self-preservation; and all made for the ladders to gain the upper deck. If, in that instant of deadly peril, one could have been amused by anything, I should have laughed to see how the gallantry and devotion of one sex, the delicacy of the other, the affection of the husband for his wife, the lover for his mistress, all vanished in the selfish feeling of the moment. There was a regular scramble who should first ascend the ladder, which had the effect, of course, of hindering all. It was a panic; but, in justice to myself and others, I must say it was but momentary: more generous emotions soon filled our breasts.

Instantly on the alarm being given by the look-out-man orders had been issued to brail up the main-trysail, clear away the fore-staysail and fore-topmast-staysail; the helm was put up; and it was hoped there would yet be time and space allowed us to wear ship, and seek our safety on the other tack. Vain delusion! in less time than it has taken me to write the history of our disaster the ship struck heavily on a reef of rocks, seeming to make every plank and timber in her crack, every bolt and treenail snap.

She was right before the wind at the moment of striking, and made quickly afterwards three

distinct thumps over the reef, and then, grinding heavily, she ran up a steep incline, and, bedding herself in the rocks, stood still. The masts, which had quivered and shaken like reeds in the breeze during her rapid transit over the reef, now fell with a loud crash. The foremast went a few feet above the deck, the mainmast just below the hounds, taking the mizen-topmast with it, and leaving the mizenmast alone standing.

It was a moment of extreme horror and dismay.

"Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell!  
Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave!"

It was a moment, stamped as it were with a branding-iron on the memory of each one who survived it, never to be effaced.

A merciful and benignant Providence ever stands our friend when we are least capable of assisting ourselves. The attempt to wear the ship had failed; had it succeeded it is probable it would but have prolonged our perilous state for a while, and that, disabled as we were, we should have drifted shortly on rocks which stood still further out at sea, and from which escape seemed impossible. But although we had been foiled in our attempt, the endeavour, under the Divine favour, had been the means of safety to us. We were

fast wedged as in a dry-dock, and with the exception of an occasional shock, as a heavier wave than ordinary raised us bodily from our cradle, to let us fall again with a violence that made the decks crack and open, and seemed to threaten that the vessel would go to pieces under us—each heave being like the dying, convulsive gasp of a strong man,—the ship remained stationary, and held together till daylight broke upon us, during which time, more than three hours, and which seemed more than three times that period, we remained huddled together on deck, screening ourselves under the bulwarks as best we could against the seas which every now and then swept the deck, and the rain which beat heavily upon us. But, although drenched to the skin, there was not a single complaint of cold amongst us: the extreme peril to our lives seemed to render us insensible to all bodily inconvenience whatever.

With the blessed light of day our hearts revived again within us. The darkness had necessitated us to remain perfectly inactive, the most trying state by far in the time of danger. Now, as the dawning light gave us, little by little, a full view of our position, we began to set our wits to work to devise schemes for our rescue.

We had gone ashore on the coast of Cornwall, a little to the westward of Mount's Bay. A reef of dark rocks, in a horse-shoe shape, the concave side presented seaward, surrounded us on three sides. We had fortunately taken the very centre of the reef, and thus placed ourselves nearest to the shore, whilst we were less exposed to the raging of the sea, which still rolled with fury upon the rocks. At a distance of rather better than a quarter of a mile, a narrow shingly beach presented itself, a steep cliff rising immediately behind it.

The water between the reef and the shore boiled and foamed, as the waves, breaking on the rocks, poured in spume and froth amidst it; but we had reason to hope it was tolerably free from rocks, and that, should the gale abate, boats might be readily launched and reach the inner side of the reef, across which we might scramble with no great difficulty.

Day had hardly broken when the beach began to be alive with people, amongst whom the men of the coast-guard muffled in their Flushing jackets, and with their black hats, were distinctly visible; but all were inactive, for as yet there seemed to be no means of rendering us aid.

There was no human habitation near. The



cliff was nearly perpendicular, and sixty or eighty feet high; and, at the distance of about a mile and a quarter apart, two promontories jutted into the sea, so as to prevent the transit of carriage or boat along the beach; and no boat was to be seen on it; but the gale was far too violent as yet, the surf on the beach too heavy, to have admitted of launching a boat had one been at hand.

If to the over-confidence of Captain Robertson we owed, in some measure, our present misfortune, it must be admitted that no person could have exerted himself more manfully than he did in the gale; and now, calm and collected, his whole soul seemed bent on planning the means of our deliverance.

It was clear that so long as the "Intrepid" held together, we could do no better than stick by her well-tried and friendly hull, our shelter amidst so many storms and tempests during the three preceding months.

Captain Robertson pointed out to us that on the gale moderating—and it had now raged some eight or ten hours with great fury—there would be but little difficulty in achieving our rescue, and that in the mean time, whilst two planks of the ship held together, our safety lay in staying

by her. The advice was good; but it has been truly remarked,—

“That good but rarely comes from good advice;”

and thus in this instance it happened that only such as were predisposed to act upon it benefited by it.

B——, of Her Majesty's —th, was a remarkably fine, powerful young man, who prided himself upon his skill in all athletic exercises. He was a first-rate swimmer, fearless and determined to a fault, and against all advice and remonstrance he resolved to trust himself to the waves. A young seaman, third mate of the vessel, thinking it shame to be outdone by a soldier, volunteered to share his danger; and L—— of the B. N. I., thinking the honour of “John Company” at stake, determined to make a third in the daring adventure.

As the object to be accomplished by these young men was to establish a communication between the ship and shore, a small line was given to them, which B—— knotted round his body for greater security. The jib-boom of the “Intrepid” was still standing, and, as the vessel had forced herself up upon the reef, overhung the inner part of it, upon which there was at times some six or eight feet water, although

every now and then the receding waves left it well nigh bare.

To swing himself from the boom-end by a rope, and, watching the moment when the rock was well covered with water, to let go his hold, drop quietly into the sea, and strike boldly for the shore, was a task easily performed by one so strong and active as B——. Davidson, the mate, quickly followed him, and the two were seen swimming stoutly almost side by side.

Poor L——, though a good swimmer and a brave and active man, was little versed in gymnastics. He swung himself from the boom, but sliding down the rope with too much velocity, fell upon the rocks when left almost bare by the receding wave. He uttered a low moan of pain, and slipped off the reef into deep water, disappearing beneath its surface. He rose again presently, but only for a moment. His arms beat the waters wildly for a brief space, and then he disappeared for ever from our sight.

B—— and the mate swam bravely about half way to land, and then it was apparent that something was wrong; they had got amongst hidden rocks. Then was heard

“ A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry,  
Of some strong swimmer in his agony ;”

and presently poor Davidson

“ drank  
The stifling wave, and then he sank.”

B—— still stretched out for the shore ; we saw him swimming until he seemed almost to touch the beach, then all motion in him suddenly ceased. Some man, bolder than the rest, at the risk of being carried out by the retiring surge, dragged his body to land. We could see the white skin suddenly bathed with crimson—his manly breast gushed with blood. We found afterwards that he had been dashed on a pointed rock with such force as to break in his breast-bone : how he contrived to swim for several minutes after such an injury is astonishing.

He never stirred or gave the slightest sign of life after he was got out of the water. He was one of those who were forbidden to tread the promised land. His attempt was indeed a gallant one, but he trusted to his own efforts alone ; he had not adopted the means of safety recommended by the captain, and so he perished.

Though poor B—— had died in his endeavour to render assistance to his shipmates, he had succeeded in establishing the means of communication with them ; but in the hurry and anxiety

consequent on his lifeless body being rescued from the greedy waves, some stupid fellow had unfastened the line from his person, thrown the end carelessly on the ground, and the next receding wave drew it back into the sea, thus rendering his sacrifice of life utterly unavailing.

The "Intrepid" had gone ashore at about three-quarters flood. As the tide rose she forged higher on the rocks, striking with great force; so much so, that at about 10 o'clock she parted amidships. The after part falling over on its side, and being swept by the heavy seas, soon broke up altogether, and the fragments shortly strewed the beach in every direction. The fore part of the ship became wedged in the rocks, and, as the tide fell, was left nearly dry. In this portion of the wreck the crew and passengers now took refuge; such of them at least as survived, for several had already gone to their last account, besides the three adventurous men whose melancholy fate I have just related, and the two who were lost off the topsail-yard during the night.

The carpenter, a steady, quiet, middle-aged man, but of rather an eccentric turn of mind, and strange notions on religious subjects, had exerted himself bravely until the ship struck.

He had then carefully sounded the well, found that the water flowed into the ship with a volume the pumps could not contend against, and was convinced that the vessel must soon become a perfect wreck. Under these circumstances he coolly got into his hammock, passed a few turns of the lashing round his body, and in this, his self-prepared coffin, awaited his fate, closing his eyes in sleep in time only to open them in eternity. His hammock was slung in the steerage, and no more was seen of him from the time the vessel broke in two, until his body, enshrouded as I have described, was picked up some distance from the scene of his death about ten days afterwards, and readily identified by some of his late shipmates.

The under steward and two seamen fell victims to their own cowardice and intemperance. Taking advantage of the confusion, they got at some of the spirits stowed beneath the cabin, and drank so deeply that the steward and one man fell insensible near the scene of their guilty folly. The other seaman, a man of powerful frame and steady brain, had sufficient consciousness left to enable him to appreciate his danger, and make an effort for the preservation of his life. When

he found the ship parting he sprang on deck, and made for the forecastle ; but the vessel opening almost beneath his feet, he had to leap across the chasm as his only chance of safety, missed his footing, and fell between the wreck, to rise no more.

The carpenter was a strong man, in the prime of life, and perfectly sober. It is probable, had he made an effort, his life would have been saved, and he might also have rendered good service to some of the weaker people around him. But he disbelieved in the possibility of rescue from his peril, did not stir a finger to accomplish it, and perished wilfully through his folly.

The other three men were lost from yielding to the temptation of the moment. They could not control their appetites, and suffered accordingly. It is probable, however, that in the case of the steward at least, fear and despair were the primary causes of death. He was not generally an intemperate man ; but flew madly to the bottle to drown the miserable feelings he was labouring under, and died a wretched victim to his dread of death.

The gale, which had reached its greatest fury at the time of high water, began sensibly to subside as the tide receded, and it became evident

that no time was to be lost if the survivors of the ill-fated vessel were to be rescued.

Immediately on the wreck being discovered, the officer commanding the district had sent to the nearest station for a life-boat and rocket gun, which were placed on waggons and driven to the top of the cliff, whence they were, with some difficulty, lowered to the beach.

After several abortive attempts, a rocket, with a small line attached, was thrown over the vessel, and to this line was quickly fastened the end of a stout hawser, having others attached in like manner to it, and which were thus dragged on shore, amidst the encouraging cheers of the spectators, faintly returned by the poor fellows on the wreck.

An effort had been made, at the same time, to launch the boat; but she filled above her thwarts, and was with difficulty hauled upon the beach again.

Both ends of the hawsers having been made fast, they formed a frail suspension-bridge, the end on shore being made fast on the top of the cliff. But although all hands clapped on it, and even got horses and tackles to assist in stretching it, from its great span the centre of it dipped in the waves.



To be of any service as a means of transit, it was necessary that some way should be contrived by which people might slide along it; and to effect this, a large iron ring with a hook attached, called a traveller, had been slipped over the end, before it was passed on shore. The line thrown to the vessel being firmly fastened to it, as well as another line, one end of which was retained in the ship, so that by pulling alternately on shore or on board the traveller journeyed from one to the other.

All being secured, a small wooden seat slung with rope, called a stool, and used for the purpose of blacking down rigging, &c., was fastened to the hook of the traveller, and one of the seamen sitting upon it, was pulled on shore, to test its efficiency. When but a little way from the wreck, his weight brought the bight, or curve, of the rope into the water; and thence, for a long distance, he was dragged partly through it, undergoing a process not very unlike the ancient punishment called "keel-hauling," and he reached the land in a very exhausted state.

The traveller being hauled off to the ship again, it was proposed that Miss F., a spirited young lady of about nineteen, should be the next to tempt the dangerous path; but fearing lest

she should be unable to maintain her hold whilst passing through the water, Mr. Gillies, the mate, volunteered to take her in his lap, and thus they were safely landed, although half drowned by the way.

The gale had subsided by this time considerably, and the reflux of the tide had left comparatively but a narrow channel between the wreck and shore. The life-boat was therefore again launched, made fast to the traveller, and thus hauled off to the ship, affording a more commodious carriage than that hitherto in use. In it were placed the two ladies and their husbands, a lady's maid, and two sick soldiers, who were passengers, with a seaman whose foot had been crushed by the falling of one of the masts.

Gratified by the success of their efforts, the people on shore set up a loud hurrah, and ran the boat to land with great speed; but, as ill luck would have it, something accidentally caught the part of the small rope which connected the traveller with the ship, and the forcible jerk, caused by the powerful exertions of so many men pulling on the other extremity, snapped it like a thread, thus cutting off the ready communication formed between the wreck and beach.

It was an untoward event for the short win-

ter's day was drawing to its close ; and unless men were prepared to pass another night on the precarious shelter they then occupied, it would be necessary to effect their landing very quickly.

Captain Robertson, who had superintended all the operations hitherto, and had evidently been in a state of great anxiety until the sick and females were safely landed, now saw that *sauve qui peut* must be the order of the day ; and calling upon all to follow him fearlessly, threw off his clothes and plunged into the sea, swimming stoutly to land. One or two of the sailors clung to the hawser with their hands and legs, and so made their way on shore ; “ And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land.”

Such shelter as a few neighbouring cottages could afford, was readily offered and most gratefully accepted for the night. We were too thankful to the Almighty for our own great deliverance, and too thoroughly exhausted, to be at all fastidious as to our lodgings. The next afternoon, I drove with V. into the little town of B. It was Sunday ; and from church and chapel poured forth a throng of well dressed respectable-looking people. They had all been worshipping the same

God, their common Maker and Preserver, but after very different forms. There were Quakers, Baptists, Wesleyans, Moravians, Church of England men. All wore a serious and devout expression on their countenances, and seemed deeply in earnest in their several creeds.

I looked around, and saw the walls were placarded with notices of a public meeting to be held in a few days, to take into consideration the proper course to adopt respecting the late insolent and insidious papal aggression.

I drove with my companion to the principal inn in the place, and we had a well served dinner, to which we did ample justice after our late privations.

In the evening, my ear caught the old familiar sound of the church-bell. I'm a Protestant of the Church of England, by education and conviction, and gladly availed myself of the opportunity for attending the public worship of that church, long denied me. V., a Roman Catholic, of course would not accompany me.

After the usual beautiful liturgy, a very excellent and impressive sermon was preached on the subject of Christian charity. The preacher took his text out of 1 Corinthians, xiii. 4—7. "Cha-

riety," he said, "thinketh no evil, . . . believeth all things, hopeth all things."

I thought it a very good discourse ; but I'm an unlearned man, and a poor Theologian.

I returned to my inn, took a cup of tea, and retired at once to bed ; but I was restless, and fevered, and could not sleep, though my mind was in a dreamy state, and crowded with thick-coming fancies. Sometimes I was on the wreck—sometimes in the little town, watching the pious crowds issuing from the different places of worship—sometimes I was listening to the preacher I had so recently left.

I must have slept at last, I suppose ; for methought he said, "As shipwrecked mariners, in their endeavours to reach the longed-for shore, support themselves by broken spar, or plank, or life-buoy, the same broad wave sustaining them on its bosom, and by its mighty power alone rendering the scanty aid they have sought available, and so escape 'safe to land ;' so may we hope that, trusting ourselves to the broad ocean of Christianity, howsoever different the human and subordinate means we adopt for our purpose, we may all get 'safe to land,' the promised land, the heavenly Canaan."

## CHAP. II.

## THE MODEL PRISON.

“ He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? or he that formed the eye, shall he not see?” — Psalm xciv. 9.

THIS is the age for model establishments; and amongst them model prisons take a prominent place. In the immediate neighbourhood of London, and in nearly all our large county towns, handsome massive buildings meet the eye. Some of them, indeed, so handsome and so elaborately decorated that, but for the lofty walls by which they are enclosed, one would be puzzled to tell for what purpose they were designed. These magnificent edifices are but the lodgings which a great and munificent country provides for its criminal population. Some are for old and hardened offenders, whose long career in the paths of vice seems to give them a fair and reasonable claim to such a provision. Others are for juvenile scoundrels, whose early initiation in crime, and the aptitude they evince for such studies, prompts the philanthropic desire to

bring them together in numbers, that mind may act upon mind and the whole body be leavened into one harmonious mass.

Certain it is that, some hundreds of years hence, people will look back to the gaols and houses of correction of the nineteenth century, as the great architectural monuments of the age, in this our land; and in our own day, so long as such goodly structures are raised and such care is taken in providing for the comfort of those who may reside in them, there seems little reason to apprehend that they will be built in vain; that they will ever lack tenants to occupy them.

Since the days of Howard a mighty revolution in prison discipline has indeed taken place; and it may be questioned whether we have not run a little into the opposite extreme; and very justly shocked at the sinks of filth and infamy which in his day received alike the hardened sinner, steeped to the eyes in crime, and him who had been guilty of a first, perhaps a venial, offence, we are not now making the abodes of the vicious and erring amongst us, far more comfortable and desirable than the earnings of honest labour can obtain, and thus, as it were, putting a premium upon vice and immorality.

Since the law has ceased to send to the gallows every man who stole a pound note, or was guilty of some little *peccadillo* or indiscretion in his dealings with his fellow-man, the number of persons claiming to be supported at the public cost, for terms varying from a few months or years, to the whole period of their amiable lives, has greatly increased, and bids fair to continue to do so in a ratio at least proportioned to the general increase in our population. The disinclination shown, also, in our colonies, to the introduction of more criminals amongst them—owing, however, in several instances their present prosperity to convict labour, when other servants were not to be procured—tends very much to complicate and embarrass the important question, “What shall we do with our criminals?”

Since the rough, but salutary, discipline of the lash has been, for the most part, discontinued in our gaols, it has become a matter of grave dispute by what means order may be maintained amongst their inmates, and a sentence of imprisonment may be made something more than one of ease and idleness, and a temporary seclusion from the world and its cares and sorrows, as well as its pleasures.

The management of rogues, indeed, in this our



day has been elevated into a science, in which honest men are deeply interested, and in the study of which we find philanthropists and political economists earnestly engaged. The care of villains is no longer confided to men of low origin and tarnished reputation,—the Peachums, and Lockets, and Jonathan Wildes, of a past generation; but gentlemen of birth and education, and officers of rank in both army and navy, do not disdain to accept the charge of them; and these are assisted in their labours by clergymen of piety and character, and narrowly watched in the execution of their office by magistrates selected from the flower of our nobility and gentry.

Many systems have been devised for the purpose of deterring the vicious from crime by the dread of its temporal consequences; others, again, have had chiefly in view the charitable object of winning the less hardened amongst criminals, from the course of ruin and destruction they have entered upon, showing them the sin and folly of their ways, awakening in them a desire to turn from their wickedness that they have committed, and to do that which is lawful and right, and ultimately to return them to society as sound and healthy members.

These different objects will ever be attended with 'success proportioned to the materials they may have to work upon. In the abstract nothing can be more delightful, more gratifying to the heart of a benevolent man, than the thought of causing "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The more practically minded man will look chiefly, perhaps, to the terrors of punishment to check crime in the great majority of men. It is not my purpose to discuss this question. I shall only observe that both are valuable in their way; that as different physical ailments require different remedies, so the moral diseases of our nature must be treated according to their symptoms. The skill of a physician is chiefly displayed in his power to detect the seat of disease and its true character, and also in gaining an accurate knowledge of the general habit and constitution of his patient. These points once clearly ascertained, the mere treatment may be left to a tyro in the art of healing; it is a matter of rule, to be sought out of books open to all. It is neither your treatment, reader, nor mine; but the result of the study and practice of physicians of all countries, and in all ages, since the world began.

The tread-mill has been deemed by some to

possess sovereign virtues for the restoration of moral health in man. The constant wearying tramp, tramp ; the white mouse in his cage ; poor Sisyphus toiling up the mountain, yet never to obtain rest at its summit ; this may, indeed, most heartily disgust men with the course they are *then* treading, and they may resolve to avoid for the future all such paths as may seem likely to lead to it ; but their sorrows will be only that of the thief described by a poet of a former day : —

“ I fear that my sorrow will scarce save my bacon ;  
For 'tis not that I murder'd, but that I was taken.” .

I should fancy there is little to touch the moral feelings, little to soften the heart, in the dull and wearying round of the tread-mill, however much it may harden and improve the muscles of the legs.

Of a similar nature to the tread-mill, and producing the like results, is the punishment of piling shot, adopted in many of our military prisons. This intellectual and highly useful occupation consists in stooping to pick up a heavy shot, carrying it a given distance, adding others to it, and then, in like manner, removing the whole pile to some other spot, where their services seem likely to be equally required.

So far from producing any good effects upon the minds and manners of offenders, these punishments have been very generally found to render them more callous and obdurate than before; and disciplinarians of a wider range of mind, have substituted useful employment for the profitless labour above mentioned. Under their benevolent auspices, trades of all sorts have been introduced within our prison-walls; shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, blacksmiths, &c., all follow their several callings under the eyes of duly qualified overseers; and when a convict has unfortunately no previous knowledge of any handicraft, he is allowed to choose one to which to be apprenticed. Thus we turn a gaol for criminals, into a factory for industrious artisans.

But although there is a considerable improvement over the old system, in putting men to works that may be beneficial to themselves and mankind generally, yet there are evils in the plan above described. Having all his daily wants amply supplied, the materials and implements necessary for his trade provided, the convict goes to work under far more favourable circumstances than his brother mechanic of unspotted character; and whilst he is able to undersell him in the market, still, in the trifle usually allowed him out of the

sale of the produce of his labour, he finds a small profit over and above his actual wants. Thus do we see encouragement held out to the vicious and dissolute artisan; whilst he who has a trade taught him, is amply compensated for the confinement he is forced to submit to. In his case the gaol becomes a training-school.

The solitary system is the grand panacea in the opinion of some. Shut out from all intercourse with his fellow-men, it is thought the minds of the most debased and reprobate amongst us must become softened and humanized.

This, like the other punishments we have been considering, must act with very different force upon different individuals. To the man of any feeling and intellect it must be a most grievous affliction, tending to drive him to despair and to break down the very foundations of reason. Indeed it has been found, not unfrequently I believe, to produce absolute insanity.

On the other hand, the mere animal, the log, the creatures "whose God is their belly," will doze and slumber away their time, and greatly prefer a life of slothful indolence, to the compulsory labour which they would have to undergo in a prison where a different management obtains;

perhaps, indeed, to liberty, if that liberty should require daily toil to support existence.

To one man the grave would appear a happy refuge from the horrors of this living tomb, and he would hail even the hangman as a kind friend come to release him from a state of intolerable torment. To another, any state of being would seem preferable to the dread of yielding up his caitiff existence. He would hug his chain to the last, drink the last drop of the bitter portion presented to his lips, rather than take the dread leap which shall usher him into the unseen world, into the presence of Him in whose gracious promises he feels he has no part, whose vengeance he has but too much reason to dread. He thinks it far better to bear the ills he has,

“ Than fly to others that he knows not of; ”

that “ whilst there’s life, there’s hope,” and clings to it with all the tenacity of despair.

Whilst travelling in North America, some years since, I was taken over the penitentiary at K——, a model prison in its way, and, as far as memory serves me, I will give my young reader an account of what I saw there.

A high and massive stone wall enclosed an ample space of ground, in which stood the prison

and buildings attached to it. The angles of the wall had small towers erected on them, and all round the interior, just below the coping, a platform was laid, upon which two or three warders, well armed, were seen pacing up and down, and from their elevated position commanding a view of the whole interior space, and the approaches to the gaol on every side.

The penitentiary itself, or rather such part of it as was erected, for it was in course of building when I visited it, was a handsome edifice of well-dressed grey stone. When finished, I think it would be capable of containing between two and three hundred convicts of both sexes; but at the time I saw it, the number of those confined within its walls did not much exceed one hundred.

I was not a little surprised and interested, on being informed that the noble building in course of erection, and all I saw around me, was the work of the convicts themselves.

One often hears the expressions "he has forged his own chain," "he is making a rod for his own back," "he will twist a rope to hang himself," and the like; figuring thereby the ill-turn a man has done, or is doing, for himself; but here were many men actually employed in building up their prison walls, fixing bolt and bar to hinder their

escape from within them, and, I believe, literally forging the chain, making the rod, and twisting the rope which might at no distant day, perhaps, be the instrument of their own punishment ; for I was assured that everything required for the service of the gaol was fabricated by the prisoners, and from the many different trades I saw in full operation during a somewhat hurried visit, I am led to believe the implements alluded to would be found to be manufactured among the rest.

The principle upon which the discipline of this gaol was based was silence, strict and constant silence. Not a tongue was allowed to move, nor was its language permitted to be expressed by sign or token of any sort. Men, by twos and threes, might be seen working together as carpenters, blacksmiths, or masons, in the open air, but not a word was exchanged between them. In spacious apartments within the building large numbers of men were congregated, busied in a variety of sedentary occupations, each man intent upon his work, and taking no heed of his neighbour. Silence reigned supreme everywhere.

Here and there an unarmed keeper might be seen amongst them, directing their work, and to this individual alone, a word might be occasionally addressed, but only if the business the man



was engaged in made an appeal to the overseer requisite.

I was much struck by the apparent diligence with which each man plied his task, and there was something remarkably singular, and almost painful, in the dead silence that prevailed amongst so many people gathered together in a small space, at least, small comparatively speaking.

My approach was totally unheeded by the busy throng, not a man raised his head to look at me, nor to render the slightest mark of respect to the governor of the establishment, who accompanied me.

Puzzled and interested by what I saw, I asked if this diligence, this perfect silence and decorum, were of every day occurrence, and was assured that such as I saw it, such was the scene presented to view each day during the hours of employment: when they were ended, each man was locked up in a separate cell, and prevented from holding any communication with those to the right and left of him.

This constant, untiring, accurate supervision, thought I, must employ a great number of men, and I inquired how many turnkeys and other officers were attached to the establishment, and

was astonished to hear that, including the warders already mentioned as guarding the outer wall, there were but twelve persons employed to overlook and coerce, if necessary, the whole of the prisoners, however numerous they might chance to be.

I have said that no notice whatever was taken of the governor and myself as we gazed at the assembled workmen, and in this lay the secret of the whole affair. Although commanding a perfect view of every part of the room in which the prisoners were employed, we were totally screened from their observation. From where we stood a hundred people might have looked upon them without their being in the least aware of the proximity of a single person.

The upper part of the room, considerably above the head of the tallest man, was boarded; and in this boarding narrow chinks and crevices were left all round, sufficient for obtaining sight of all within the room by applying the eye close to them, but far too narrow to be even observable from below. To make these apertures available for the purpose of exercising a *surveillance* over the prisoners, a platform was built up all round the outside of the room, and on this platform, at all times, a warder was supposed to be stationed

with his eye to a crevice, noting carefully the conduct of every individual beneath.

What was the precise nature of the punishment inflicted on a poor fellow found offending against any of the rules of the prison I could not exactly ascertain. No doubt it would vary greatly according to the nature of the offence; but I was given to understand that each warder had authority to inflict a certain amount of corporal castigation, summarily, and at his own discretion. If the breach of discipline, however, was of a grave nature, it was reported to the governor, who awarded such punishment as he deemed fit.

Thus, although in reality not a foot might tread the platform for hours, not an eye might be directed to a crevice the whole day, each man lived constantly under the impression that an eye was ever upon him, watching his every movement, and ready to visit with swift and sharp punishment the slightest aberration from the strict rules laid down for his observance. He felt that if he flagged in his task for a single moment, if he moved lip or finger, if he so much as smiled, or cast a furtive glance around him, he might be instantly called forth, and subjected to a severe chastisement.

Nor was this supervision ever relaxed for a single moment throughout the twenty-four hours, or rather, I should say, the influence exerted over the minds of the convicts by the supposition that their every movement was overlooked, its propriety canvassed, and perhaps noted against them for future punishment, or that a swift vengeance was about at each moment to fall upon them, was never relaxed.

The cells in which they were confined at night were open at each end, being secured by strong iron gratings. Bright lamps burned in the passages by which they were approached, throwing a strong light upon each sleeper; and on one side of the passage was a wooden partition, pierced as before mentioned, and behind which the ever watchful warder stood, or was supposed to stand, his eye riveted on the slumbering felon, marking his every turn, and restless movement, or guilty start.

Those employed during the day in the open air, or covered sheds, were equally exposed to the *surveillance* of hidden watchers. Thus, throughout the whole period of a man's incarceration there was literally not a moment in which he could say he was free from observation, not a moment in which he might not incur

punishment if he deviated in the slightest degree from the rules laid down for the guidance of his conduct.

In theory, the silent system certainly appeared to me very far superior to any of those I have before alluded to. It combined, in a great measure, the advantages of several other systems. The convict had little more enjoyment of the society of his fellow prisoners than he would have had if placed in solitary confinement. His labours were of the most useful description ; such, indeed, as the warmest advocates of the industrial system must approve ; and the work exacted called for as much exertion and fatigue of body as could well be obtained by means of shot-piling, or tread-mill, without, like those modes of punishment, having any baneful effects upon the mind.

I was assured that in practice the silent system fully sustained the excellence of its theory, and judging from the signs of diligence and order displayed, the amount and excellence of the work performed, and the very few officials conducting the establishment, I am led to believe that no undue credit was claimed for it.

The women confined in the penitentiary were kept apart from the men, and with them the rule of silence was less strictly enforced. This might

have been from the extreme difficulty there would have been found in carrying it out in its fullest extent. But as one great object in maintaining silence and non-interchange of ideas amongst the men was to prevent the possibility of combination for escape, or rebellion against the few persons set to guard them, it might be thought that with females there was not the same necessity for bridling their tongues, and forbidding all communication between them.

I have said that my visit was a hurried one, and made some years since. I do not remember whether at the time I made any inquiries as to whether diligence and good conduct, as reported by the overseers from their secret observations, would be noted for reward or favourable consideration; but doubtless some such arrangement must have subsisted to render the system consistent and efficacious.

Allowing rewards and punishments to be fairly meted to the convicts according to their merits, as ascertained by the mode of espionage described, we here see a system of government assimilated to that of the Creator's rule over His people, so far as human infirmity may attempt to copy from the Eternal Wisdom, but how different in its results!

In the one case we see a body of men, for the most part hardened in depravity, rendering strict and ready obedience to the stern regulations of a gaol, and this more from the knowledge that their outward actions may be at any time overlooked by those who have the authority to punish what they may do amiss, than from the experience of punishment itself.

Every man is fully aware that the most vigilant watcher cannot possibly observe him at all times. He knows that if called on to account for any breach of prison discipline he will have to stand before fallible judges, men like himself, and liable to be imposed upon by any specious defence he may set up. He knows, also, the extent of their jurisdiction, and power to punish him; that stripes, many or few, solitary confinement on bread and water, for a longer or shorter period, or a task of extra work, of greater or lesser severity, are all they can award him. They have not even power to "kill the body." Yet the dread of these limited, temporal punishments, following on an act of disobedience, and the conviction that any such act, however trifling, may be noticed, and made a ground of accusation against him by the unseen watchman placed over him, is generally found sufficient to deter the

boldest and most reckless from infringing the laws laid down for his observance.

Surely we have great cause to say with the Apostles to their Lord and ours, "Increase our faith;" for what can it be but our miserable short-coming in this respect that makes the great majority of us continue in folly and sin as we do?

It is true, indeed, that every one who professes to believe anything of a Supreme Ruler of the universe, and a future state of existence, "must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" and, moreover, that He is "a jealous God, and visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him." Every man who reflects for a moment must say, "He that planted the ear shall he not hear; or he that made the eye shall he not see?" yet with by far the greater number of us these truths are assented to by the reason, rather than felt in the depths of the heart." We lack that lively faith which "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We should each cry, "Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

If the great and appalling facts of God's omni-



presence and omniscience were ever present to our souls ;—if we could say with David, “ thou knowest my down sitting, and mine uprising ; thou understandest my thoughts long before ; thou art about my path, and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways ; ”—surely we should “ stand in awe, and sin not ; ” we should lift our hearts from earth to heaven, and say, “ God is our hope and strength ; a very present help in trouble.” And whilst we should be careful to “ submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake,” we should entertain no slavish dread of our fellow man, however high exalted above us, “ and fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

## CHAP. III.

## THE FOOT-RACE.

"So run, that ye may obtain."—1 COR. ix. 24.

OF all days in the year the Derby Day is that, perhaps, which excites the most lively interest amongst all classes of Englishmen. From the peer to the costermonger the dawn of that day is ever hailed with delight by all. Care and sorrow are banished for the time as unwelcome intruders, whose presence on Epsom Downs would be improper in the highest degree; whilst mirth and jollity are installed in their accustomed places.

"The Road to the Derby" has formed the subject of illustration to many a pen and pencil caricaturist. And although of late years the establishment of railways has caused thousands to avail themselves of that rapid and commodious means of transit, the "Road" continues to exhibit one continued throng of vehicles, equestrians, and pedestrians, of every imaginable and unimaginable variety, from Hyde Park Corner to the Course.

Horse-racing has long been a favourite pastime with the English people, and whatever its natural and inherent evils, whatever the follies and vices engrafted on it, and which it may be thought by many are fostered by, and inseparable from it, it cannot be denied that there is much to admire, much to feel proud of, when we visit one of our great national race meetings.

The thousands upon thousands of happy countenances,—the general appearance of keen enjoyment diffused throughout the vast multitude assembled together to partake in one common pleasure,—the magnificence of equipage on one hand, and its ludicrous contrast on the other,—the variety of figure and costume,—the bustle and excitement of the scene,—are all calculated to interest and amuse the mind of the beholder, more or less, according to his idiosyncrasy, and make him pride himself upon the name of Englishman.

But it is when we come to view the noble animals whose speed and endurance on that day are to be put to the test of keenest competition; to mark whose performances the vast and multifarious crowd have been drawn together from all parts, that the admirer of Nature, he who delights to gaze on the great works of creation fresh from

the Creator's hand, "to look from Nature up to Nature's God," finds the purest gratification.

What beautiful, what magnificent forms! What grace and strength combined! What perfect symmetry! The glossy coat,—the finely turned limb,—the arching neck,—the full mane and tail,—the vein and muscle starting through the skin,—the dilated nostrils,—the sparkling, lustrous eye,—each, in turn, calls forth our admiration, and obliges us to confess the surpassing beauty and grandeur of the Creator's works, their unrivalled excellence, and perfect adaptation to their intended purposes, and how insignificant is the handiwork of man beside them.

Nor is it the mere external beauty of the race-horse we are called upon to admire, there is much of moral beauty, if I may be allowed to use the expression, about him: much from which man may derive a profitable lesson. When we consider his vast strength, and the means of aggression that he possesses, we cannot but be charmed by his extreme gentleness and docility.

See that slight, pale lad who bestrides him, how utterly incapable of restraining him should he put forth his powers in opposition to his rider's will! Yet a single word is sufficient to insure his obedience; the slightest touch of bit, or whip,

or spur, is enough to control and regulate his motions.

And mark his conduct in the race, his courage and endurance! his generous emulation! yet all in strictest subjection to the will of the master.

It is true here and there we find a vicious horse, as we too often find a vicious man. One will not be restrained, but rushes madly forward, careless of his rider's endeavours to curb him. Another is stubborn and sulky, and cannot be induced to start. A third springs forward in the race with a light, free spirit, and seems to bid fair to be a winner, but before a quarter of his career is run he swerves from his course, "starting aside like a broken bow," and disappoints all the expectations formed of him.

To none of these horses will the prize be awarded, however great their natural powers, how capable soever of distancing all competitors. "The race is not to the swift" alone, many other qualifications are requisite to insure success.

But the great majority of race-horses are unquestionably as tractable as they are mighty in strength and courage, and show a perseverance and anxiety in running the race appointed them, which men might imitate to their great advantage.

But it is not of the Derby, or of any other

horse-race, I am about to speak. I purpose relating a little incident that excited my warmest sympathy at the time when two men contended for mastery in a foot-race.

Perhaps of all our national sports, of those at least open to the competition of the poor man, the foot-race—cricket alone excepted—is the least liable to objection.

The popular amusements of former days,—bull-baiting, bear and badger baiting, cock-fighting, and dog-fighting,—have very properly fallen into discredit, and are comparatively but little practised in these times. They are all, more or less, cruel and brutal. Boxing, once a manly English exercise, calculated to encourage a spirit of rustic chivalry and love of fair play amongst us, and which had little of danger in it when practised only by well trained men, and under the *surveillance* of competent seconds, has, through the folly and wickedness of some of its professors, lost all hold on the sympathies of the respectable portion of society. The purring fight of Lancashire is brutal and disgusting, fit only to be classed with the gouging of America. Wrestling is liable to inflict serious injury on those who practise it; but running and walking seem little likely to be attended with inconvenience or evil

to any one, whilst they tend to develop the muscular powers in no small degree, and to call forth the more manly feelings of our nature.

There is nothing, however, so innocent and harmless in itself that the evil passions of men cannot turn to abuse, and one sordid and debasing vice is indeed the canker-worm which has utterly destroyed the credit of the prize-ring, and materially damaged the character of the race-course. I need hardly say that avarice, and the gambling spirit it creates amongst men, is the vice to which I allude. I was once witness to a striking and disgraceful instance of the power of this vile passion over men by no means of the lowest grade, to judge by the outside appearance, and will relate it in a few words.

I was stopping with a friend at B——, in H——shire, and hearing that a race was to come off between two men at W——, I was easily persuaded to witness it.

The rival pedestrians were men of very different mould, and came to the ground under widely different circumstances, which must have had powerful influence over them at starting. Scanlon—to give their names—was a native of the county, and had long enjoyed a high reputation amongst his acquaintance. He lived—was

born I believe—at F——, and had long rejoiced in the *soubriquet* of the Antelope. He was a man of about thirty years of age, five feet seven inches in height, of a spare but wiry form, well proportioned, and carrying himself remarkably erect.

His countenance wore a smiling and self-confident expression, which bespoke him on the best terms with himself. He was dressed with much care and attention to appearance, nay, there was something almost foppish about him.

He wore an elastic web frock of fine cotton, striped with blue, a pair of white jean trowsers, confined to his waist by a broad leathern belt and buckle, and had his head bound about with a blue silk handkerchief, spotted with white. His feet were encased in a pair of white leather shoes, coming high up the instep, what are termed Oxford's, I believe, and he had on white silk stockings.

No sooner did he alight from the carriage in which he had been driven to the ground, than he was greeted with loud shouts of triumph by his friends, and several pushed forward and grasped his hand with much warmth and good will.

He received their friendly salutations with evident satisfaction, and flinging off the handsome paletot which partly concealed the dress I have



before described, he moved about with a jaunty air, as one to whom success was certain.

There was little in the appearance of Jopling, as he stepped from the gig which conveyed him to the scene of combat, and leisurely divested himself of the white upper coat which he wore, and which had long since seen its best days, to win one's favourable opinion, or incline one to back him in the coming race.

He stood about five feet nine inches, or possibly even more, for a stooping, slouching gait took off very much from his apparent stature. He was round shouldered, narrow chested, broad across the hips, and had very long arms and legs: the length of the latter being principally in the thigh bones.

His face was of heavy expression, and had rather a sickly hue. Altogether I do not remember to have ever seen so awkward and unprepossessing a person stand forward as a competitor for public applause.

His dress agreed very well with his appearance. There was nothing of smartness about it. He wore an old flannel jacket and trowsers, had his head bound round with a printed cotton handkerchief, and one of similar description, but different pattern, supported his trowsers. A pair of old

shoes and gray worsted stockings completed his apparel.

On arriving on the ground he was met by no encouraging cheers, and no one proffered him the hand of friendship.

Some, indeed, who were his backers, came up to him and said a few words, but even they seemed to have no knowledge of him; and although they quietly took the odds offered against him by the friends of Scanlan, it seemed almost as if they were ashamed of their man.

I could not find out exactly where he came from, but believe it was from some part of W——shire. From all I could glean he was almost an untried man, who had attracted the attention of a certain person of sporting celebrity, and been matched by him against the Antelope.

Spite of his ungainly appearance, he must have had the advantage over his rival considerably in point of age, being at least five or six years his junior. There was much of awkwardness in his build, which must have been natural to him; but I was led to believe, in the sequel, that his slouching air was partly assumed to give the spectators an unfavourable impression respecting him, and induce them to stake their money freely against him.

The feeling against the stranger, for such Jopling was, was evidently so strong from the first, that I found my compassionate sympathies insensibly enlisted in his favour. I never bet; but, had I been inclined to do so, I should hardly have ventured to back my protégé with my purse, although he had my hearty good wishes.

The ground selected for the trial of speed, was a measured half-mile of tolerably level and smooth turf on M—— common. The race was to be a fair toe and heel walk, of a mile in length, the men starting together, and going over the same ground. A post was erected at each end of the course, with umpires and referee stationed by them to watch the proceedings and see all was fair. The men were to start from one post, walk round the other, and so back to the first to win.

Before starting it was evident that a feeling nearly allied to contempt was entertained for poor Jopling, and the odds were very freely laid on the Antelope. The men had not walked a hundred yards, however, before it was plain that a revolution had taken place in the opinions of the spectators respecting the powers of the pedestrians. But with a favourable impression of Jopling's prowess came the dread of losing the money staked against him, and a very bitter feeling of

hostility was soon manifested towards the poor fellow, which, in the end, was displayed in a most unmanly and cowardly manner.

The rivals started at a moderate pace, keeping side by side, and step for step, for the first sixty or eighty yards, when the Antelope began to make play, with a view to get away from his antagonist, and take the lead.

It was very clearly to be seen that Scanlan had increased his pace, and was making great efforts to distance his competitor ; but although Jopling still kept exactly even with him, not suffering him to gain an inch of ground in advance, it was not so easy to detect an acceleration of speed in him. It seemed, indeed, as if he maintained his position more by an increased length of stride than by a more rapid movement ; and it was only by watching the motions of his rival in the race, and observing that he kept pace for pace with him, that you became aware that Jopling had indeed gone beyond the easy, slouching step with which he started.

It was now evident that the Antelope had found an awkward customer, and would have to exert himself to the very utmost to maintain the high reputation he had so long borne. Several times he made a desperate effort to shake off his

troublesome companion, and at these moments the pace became absolutely astonishing. But all would not do; Jopling stuck by him like his shadow; and in this manner, like the twins of Siam, they rounded the first post together.

The men now kept on pretty steadily together until about half way home from the post, when Scanlan made another attempt to get away from his rival, and exerted every nerve and muscle for the purpose. It was all in vain that he put forth his strength, Jopling still kept side by side with him, and on his relaxing his efforts, exhausted by their violence, shot a-head of him like an arrow from a bow, and was almost instantly twelve or fifteen paces in advance.

It was now that the ill-will against the stranger, hitherto confined to words and looks, began to be displayed in deeds of the most disgraceful and dastardly nature. It seemed to be resolved upon by many of the spectators, who were doubtless deeply interested in the issue of the race, that Jopling should not win it; and that, if it were impossible for their champion to win the day, an interruption should be given to the contest, which should render it impossible for the umpires to decide to whom the palm of victory should be given.

Hitherto the ground had been kept open for the competitors, and they had had only each other's speed and judgment to contend against. Now the mob closed in upon the leading man, and thus tried to check his career. Several men and boys rushed before him, crossing and re-crossing his path, and jostling him as they passed; and one ruffian spat in his face, whilst another tried to trip him with his stick, and, failing in this, struck him smartly over the shins with it.

The conduct of Jopling at this critical period was worthy of all admiration and applause. He seemed to be as impassible as impassable. He neither looked to the right or left, uttered not a word of remonstrance or anger, did not so much as put his hand to his face when spit upon, but pushed steadily on for the goal of his ambition, and with such force and vigour, that, on a stout man pressing too closely on him, he caught him with his shoulder with such violence as to send him staggering eight or ten paces, when, coming in contact with another, they both fell, and rolled on the sward together.

Encouraged by the conduct of his friends, and taking advantage of the embarrassment of his opponent, Scanlan made a last grand effort to recover

the day, and strained every nerve to overtake his rival, but all to no purpose.

As might be expected, Jopling obtained the reward his patient endurance, forbearance, and persevering energy so well merited. He strode past the winning-post a victor, and was hailed by the hearty acclamations and congratulations of his few acquaintance and backers, who had profited largely by his success. In the triumph of that moment what recked he of the sneers, and taunts, and buffetings he had had to submit to during his short but arduous struggle in the race? They were forgotten, or remembered only to give additional zest to the happiness he now experienced. If his heart yet throbbed tumultuously,—if every limb trembled from the excessive efforts he had been obliged to make,—if he felt ready to sink from fatigue,—what did it matter now? He had reached his journey's end, and rest, tranquillity, and enjoyment were now secured to him.

I was on horseback; and on seeing the attack made on Jopling, when near the end of his race, I pushed towards him with a sort of instinctive feeling to attempt his succour, but the crowd was too dense to admit of my getting close to him without trampling the people under my horse's hoofs. On seeing the termination of his gallant struggle,

I could resist my feelings no longer. I threw myself from my steed, pushed through the crowd, and shook him heartily by the hand.

Despite his evident fatigue, in the proud smile that now lit up his countenance, and in the erect figure, I could hardly recognise the awkward, heavy-looking man who had started for the prize but a few minutes before. It might be that the victory he had won had really metamorphosed him, or, as I all along suspected, he had made the most of natural imperfections with a view to mislead people, and so induce them to back his adversary the more freely, a proceeding hardly to be justified even by the lax ethics of the sporting world.

I know nothing of Jopling; I never saw or heard anything of him before or after his successful race. He may have been an honest, respectable man, or very much the reverse; but as I rode quietly home, I could not but reflect on his noble conduct that day, and think how he might well serve for a type and model to all Christian men in running the race that is severally set before them; and yet he did it "to obtain a corruptible crown" only.

From his first appearance on the arena he had met nothing but coolness, contempt, and ill-feel-



ing from the little world assembled there. Every moral influence had been unsparingly exerted against him. He was doomed to run his race uncheered by a single word of kindness or encouragement. There was everything to dishearten him and damp his ardour.

His physical labours, too, were tremendous; for, although he seemed to have a very decided superiority over his adversary, and to perform his task with much ease to himself, he had a man of extraordinary power to contend against, and was compelled to put forth his utmost strength in the contest.

And, lastly, the ill-will so early exhibited against him by word, look, and gesture, displayed itself ultimately in unmanly insult and outrage, and he had to use the most strenuous exertions to enable him to force his way to the winning-post.

Had he been of a timid, desponding disposition—he had scarce found heart to withstand the depressing influence of his reception that day. Had he lacked confidence and perseverance, or strength to run his career manfully, he had given up the race when he found the powerful rivalry he had to strive against. Had he been deficient in courage, he had faltered, or even halted, when the

crowd attacked him so savagely. Had he been wanting in temper, he had lost all command over himself at the critical moment when his exertions were to be crowned with success, and, yielding to the natural desire to retaliate the insults and persecutions heaped upon him, had given his enemies the advantage they sought, and lost the fruits of all his labours at the very moment they were almost within his grasp.

But from the very first he seemed to have but one object in view, — the prize for which he was competing. He felt that he had power given him to achieve his task, if he only chose to exert it fully. He knew the course to be but short, however rugged it might prove to him, and resolved patiently to endure toil, and contumely, and insult, and outrage, if needs must, rather than forego the object of his cherished ambition.

Truly “the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” On every side we see men of all classes and of all callings struggling forward in the race for the honours and rewards this world holds forth to all who excel in its various pursuits; honours and rewards by no means to be despised if honestly won, and if in striving for them we are ever mindful in the first place to “set our affections

on things above," and make our desire after "things on the earth" strictly subordinate to our higher aim. But great as are the energies, mental and corporeal, put forth by the worldling in his career, how tame and lukewarm, for the most part, are we Christians in our endeavours in "the race that is set before us!" "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."

Surely we should be ashamed to display such apathy and want of manly spirit, if engaged in any contest for worldly supremacy?

Let us, then, "so run that we may obtain;" "not as uncertainly," "not as though we had already attained," but, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

## CHAP. IV.

## A MAN OVERBOARD.

"And beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." — St. Matt. xiv. 30.

THAT "there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous" was a favourite aphorism of the great Buonaparte's; and it cannot be denied, that much which is ludicrous is often mingled with that which in itself is solemn and affecting enough.

Many of my young readers will, doubtless, remember the story of the lieutenant who, having to report the circumstance of a man falling overboard to his captain, and being afflicted with an impediment in his speech, found, under the painful excitement of the moment, that he was unable to articulate anything beyond "the-e-e's a-a-a m-a-n," when his captain, growing impatient, called out, "Sing it, sir, sing it!" upon which the lieutenant began to chaunt, in a good, round, cheerful voice, "there's a man overboard, over-

board, overboard, there's a man overboard," &c. ; and, with this jocund song upon his lips, rushed again on deck to render his assistance in the trying emergency.

Some years ago, while on my passage from North America in one of the fine packet ships, commonly called liners, which it is to be feared must soon give way before the all-powerful competition of steam, I was witness to a scene strongly compounded of the sublime and ridiculous, but in which the latter, in the end, preponderated.

We were just sitting down to tea about eight o'clock one evening, when one of our passengers, a lady who had long trod the histrionic boards, and was returning from starring it most successfully amongst the Yankees, descended the cabin ladder, and in a measured and impressive tone of voice exclaimed, "Don't be alarmed ; there is a man overboard."

Her somewhat large figure was drawn up to its full height, her face wore an expression of calm dignity and determination, which any incipient "Lady Macbeth" might have envied, and which, even at that moment of surprise, struck me as being excessively comic. The effect of her considerate caution was but slight. Tea, toast, and bread and butter were instantly relinquished, and

a rush made for the ladder which had well nigh upset our kind monitress.

On reaching the deck, however, we were agreeably relieved from our anxiety by finding that it was a fish, and not a man, which had fallen into the sea ; and as "one man's meat is another man's poison," so the poor creature found its safety from extremest peril in an element which has proved fatal to thousands upon thousands of men.

It seemed some of the sailors were amusing themselves harpooning porpoises, and, one being struck, the line was instantly manned, and a run made with it ; but just as it was on the point of being hauled in upon the vessel's deck, it contrived to wriggle itself clear of the harpoon, and fell into the water.

It was at this moment when a cry was set up by the disappointed sailors of "he's overboard," and the loud splash, caused by the bulky fish falling into the water, caught her ear, that our fair friend put her foot on deck, and as quickly left it again, to convey to us the interesting intelligence she believed herself capable of imparting.

I remember once seeing a man fall from the main-topmast-head of a line-of-battle ship, striking the rigging repeatedly in his rapid descent, and finally bounding from it into the sea.

We all gazed with speechless horror, concluding the poor fellow must be dashed to pieces ; but I could hardly refrain from smiling when, on jumping on to the poop, and looking over into the water, I saw him swimming very composedly, and heard him say, in a tone in which no remarkable sign of emotion was observable, "lower a boat."

In about a fortnight from the day of his perilous fall this man was again at his duty, and apparently none the worse for it. He had, indeed, a marvellous escape from destruction. Whether in his momentary agony he cried "Lord, save me," I know not. It is probable he did; for in the hour of need, those who are usually the most careless and reprobate amongst us are ready enough to call for aid from Him who at other times they all but disown. Of this I am quite sure, that none but the Lord's hand had power to preserve him in that fearful moment; even the secondary causes, which make us sometimes unmindful of God's mercies to us, and disposed to attribute our rescue from peril and death, either to the brave exertions of other men, or our own strength and presence of mind, were here wanting.

But although something of the ridiculous may at times be mixed up with so fearful a calamity as that of a man falling overboard, it is in itself,

unquestionably, one of the most distressing accidents that can happen at sea ; and one, when the man is lost, which strikes a chill into the hearts of all on board. The cry of " a ship close on board," or of " breakers right ahead," is startling and alarming. Still more so the quick tinkling of the bell which announces to the seaman that his ship is on fire. These sounds, however, whilst they make the pulse throb with unwonted rapidity, are calls at once to exertion. Every one has his station to go to, his prescribed duty to attend to, and the knowledge of personal danger at once rouses all our energies to cope with it. Indeed, the very weakness of our nature, our selfishness, and regard for our personal welfare, often tend to nerve and strengthen us, and make us act as if fear were a stranger to our bosoms, when in truth it reigns supreme there.

The cry of " a man overboard," however, whilst it carries with it no sense of personal alarm, depresses and unmans one more, perhaps, than any other. " Who is it ?" is our first interrogatory, and one that can seldom be immediately answered, although on it may depend the fate of brother, son, or dearest friend. " Can he swim ?" is usually the second hurried question put, although the power of swimming in such circumstances is



frequently only a power to prolong one's agony, not to aid in our preservation.

"He long survives who lives an hour  
In ocean self-upheld."

But what is one hour, when a long, dark winter's night, perhaps, is closing in on the poor cast-away? He may struggle bravely for existence, "as one who strives and tugs for life, and is by force subdued;" but long before the heavy hours of darkness wear away, and the dawn of another day breaks upon the world, eternity will have dawned upon him, unless some merciful interposition of Providence is vouchsafed in his favour. Such a display of the Divine mercy in man's necessity I am about to relate.

The sun had just set on a wild and threatening evening in the middle of November 184—, when H. M. steamer V—— passed some leagues to the N. W. of Ushant, on her way to Lisbon.

The vessel was battling bravely against a fresh S. W. breeze, and diving bows under every moment, as she encountered the heavy sea which the wind, acting against a strong ebb tide, invariably makes in the chops of the Channel.

The people had not long been piped down from quarters, and some were below, some solacing

themselves with a whiff of tobacco, others grouped about the deck discussing the events of the past day, or prophesying those of the coming night, when the cry of "a man overboard" gave a sudden check to conversation, caused the ashes to be dashed from the pipe, and the half-sleeping man to start to his feet, and concentrated the thoughts of that little community, but lately so varied, upon one painful subject.

It was yet light enough to discern objects plainly; and thus the lieutenant in charge of the watch, Mr. M——, quickly caught sight of a man struggling in the water in the wake of the vessel, and, calling out to the first lieutenant, who stood near him, "there he is," sprang at once into the sea.

It was a generous impulse; but poor M—— had sadly miscalculated his powers as a swimmer, or his resolution; for no sooner did he find himself immersed, than all recollection apparently of the object for which he had plunged into the waves vanished from his mind; he was only alive to the danger of his own position; and, calling piteously for aid, he made at once for the vessel.

Almost at the instant that M—— leaped from the taffrail, C——, the first lieutenant, rushed to the fore part of the quarter-deck and shouted

loudly to the engineer, "ease her," "stop her;" and as that attentive and skilful officer readily obeyed the order, he gave the word "a turn astern," and then ran aft to see how far the vessel had already distanced the poor fellow who had fallen from his floating home, and him who had so nobly gone to his rescue, when, to his horror, he perceived his messmate close to the ship's quarter, and making direct for her starboard paddle-wheel.

The engine had just been reversed, but had hardly had power as yet to stop the vessel's headway. To dart forward again and roar "stop her" at the very top of his stentorian voice, was hardly the work of a second, and with almost equal promptitude his injunction was complied with; but short as was the interval of time, poor M—— had almost reached the wheel, then in rapid rotation. It was indeed but just in time to save him from destruction: half a revolution more, and he had never set foot again upon the deck of the V——.

As the last float fell lazily in the water M—— reached it, exhausted by fear and the violent efforts he had made to regain the shelter he had so rashly deserted. He clung, panting and half insensible, to the paddle-board as his only safety:

a moment sooner and it had dashed his brains out.

M——'s strength was so completely prostrated, and his nerves so unstrung, by the awful predicament he had been placed in, that he could make no further effort for his own preservation, and it was found necessary for several men to go down inside the paddle-wheel and thus pass him on deck,—a work of some hazard and no little time, for he was a heavy man and helpless as a child.

Once safe on deck, he was left to recover his powers, corporeal and mental, as he best could, whilst the attention of all was directed to the poor fellow for whose sake M—— had made his kind but ill-judged attempt to render assistance, and which had seemingly deprived him of his only chance of succour.

Darkness had now set in; objects could be descried but a little distance from the vessel, and no trace of the man could be seen. The boats were lowered immediately, however, and pulled astern of the ship and in various directions for more than an hour, when they were recalled on board, the weather becoming very dirty and squally, and with heavy hearts we pursued our voyage. Before going ahead, however, the people were called to muster, and it was found that John

Clarke, a fore-castleman, and one of the best seamen in the ship, was missing.

It was known that he had fallen from the head, and therefore must have passed under the paddle-wheel, so that, although he had been seen swimming for a moment, it was concluded he must have sustained such injuries as would render protracted exertion impossible.

The life-buoy had been let go, but in the hurry of the moment whoever did so had pulled the wrong line, and released it without firing the fuse, so that it was of no service whatever, and was never seen again. A boat's mast and two or three oars had likewise been thrown into the sea, and one of the latter was picked up by the cutter, and great hopes entertained that the man would be found in its vicinity, but nothing could be seen of him; and it appeared afterwards that the oar picked up had been thrown to M—— just before he reached the paddle-wheel.

We reached Lisbon without any other disaster, from thence proceeded to Gibraltar, and anchored in Plymouth Sound about a month from the time of losing poor Clarke.

M—— had gone in the sick list, and kept pretty close to his cabin for more than a week after his luckless adventure. When he appeared

at the mess-table there was an attempt made by some of the younger and most thoughtless amongst us, to laugh at his failure as a life-preserver; but the subject was far too serious and painful for jesting upon, and the attempt was quickly discouraged by the majority of the mess.

Poor M—— was evidently deeply grieved at the whole affair. Besides the chagrin and mortification he felt at the signal display he had made of want of nerve and presence of mind, so essential in a naval officer, he evidently looked upon himself as the cause of Clarke's death, as indeed he apparently was; although, if he had been struck by the paddle wheel, as was supposed, it is probable that nothing could have saved him.

M—— applied to be superseded soon after our arrival in England, and has never been employed since. I have heard he is reading for Holy Orders. He was an excellent fellow, and showed no want of spirit or courage on general occasions. It may be he was seized with cramp, for the water must have been cold in the extreme. It was a subject, however, on which he never chose to speak, and of course I felt a delicacy in touching upon it. He seemed, indeed, like the fisherman of Galilee, to have had a superabundance of courage in the first instance, which

prompted him to attempt that which in the end he had not fortitude to persevere in, and finding himself in danger of sinking he called loudly for help, which was mercifully accorded to him.

We had hardly anchored in the Sound before a signal was made for a midshipman to go to the flag-ship, and on the boat returning some time afterwards, we were all astonished to see John Clarke sitting in the stern sheets, looking none the worse for his mishap, and smiling good humouredly at his shipmates, who seemed to doubt the evidence of their eyes, or to imagine it was a ghost, and no real man: they gazed on. But it was John himself; and he gave me the following interesting particulars of his miraculous preservation from a watery grave.

He had been busied, he said, in some little duty on the bowsprit, and was just coming inboard again, when the vessel made a heavy plunge, the sea washing completely over him, and, as he expressed it, "driving the very breath out of his body." He missed his hold and fell into the water, and saw, as he fell, the paddle-wheel revolving quickly in front of him, and seemingly about to dash him to atoms.

There was no time for thought. In his despair he cried, "Lord, save me," scarce believing that

his prayer would avail anything, that salvation for him was possible; salvation at least from the horrible fate that seemed impending! But quicker than thought itself—and he told me that all seemed present to his mind at once, his danger, his need of God's mighty aid, and his despair of obtaining it, as the lightning's flash illumines the scene in darkest night, making each feature of the landscape momentarily but distinctly visible—came the instinct that insured his safety, the answer to his half-uttered and mistrustful prayer. He dived deep into the waves, he heard the whirring of the wheel over his head, felt the water agitated by it as he passed underneath; then all consciousness left him, and he arose under the stern of the vessel as if waking from a fearful dream.

He now saw the vessel rapidly leaving him. He saw M—— jump from her into the sea, the life-buoy fall, and oars thrown to him. For a moment he believed that he should quickly be picked up, and contented himself by merely floating quietly on his back, being too much exhausted by the exertion of diving, and the depressing effect of the alarm he had undergone, to be capable of any active effort for his preservation. A short time, however, made it evident that his fate



must depend upon himself, that whatever kind intentions might have been entertained respecting him, something had occurred to frustrate them. He therefore summoned all his energies, and swam stoutly for the ship, now a considerable distance from him, and growing indistinct in the momentarily increasing gloom. He supposed he must have swam fully half an hour, which appeared at least two hours to him at that time, and it was nearly dark, when he struck against something floating in the water, and which proved, to his great joy, to be the boat's mast.

Resting with his chest upon this frail support, but which proved sufficiently buoyant, with a slight movement of his legs, to keep his head well above water, he began to recover breath after his long continued exertions, and had now time to consider his position, and ultimate chances of rescue from its perils.

He told me that like most of his class (and I fear of nearly all other classes also), he had long lived a careless sort of life, little mindful of God's daily mercies to him; but that now his first impulse was to offer Him hearty thanks for preserving him in his great necessity. He said, although he was only floating on a small spar, in a winter's night, with many hours of darkness

before him, he never entertained a doubt of his ultimate safety from the time he clutched the mast. After having been preserved from being dashed to pieces by the paddle-wheel, and having the means of supporting himself put into his hands, just as he felt that his strength was failing, and that he must soon sink to rise no more, he was convinced that God's mercy would be continued to him until he was placed in perfect safety.

He seemed to feel that confidence in the Almighty's protection which David felt when, speaking of his victory over the lion and the bear which had attacked his father's flock, when about to encounter the giant Goliath, he said to Saul, "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Certain it is that the more we reflect on God's past mercies to us, the more we are encouraged to hope for a continuance of them.

All that long, dismal night poor Clarke clung to his support. He said the time appeared to him like months instead of hours, but that his trust in the Almighty's mercy, and his conviction that he should be spared from a miserable death on this occasion, only grew stronger as he felt

that so many additional hours of life had already been granted to him.

When morning at last dawned it seemed to him as if his rescue were already achieved ; but he was doomed to undergo yet more disappointment and anxiety before it was ultimately accomplished.

As the full light of day made objects visible about him he espied, to his no small comfort and re-assurance, the life-buoy floating within fifty yards of him, and still keeping hold of the mast, lest by any accident he should fail to reach the more powerful means of flotation so kindly presented to him in his hour of need, he swam with it to the buoy, "and felt," he said, "quite as if he had reached the old V——'s deck again."

Some considerable time had passed away, when he saw a large ship running for the Channel, and apparently steering directly for him ; but, although he raised himself as high above the water as possible, and shouted with all his might, it passed wide of him ; and two other vessels in like manner disappointed him shortly afterwards.

I should have thought that these quick recurring prospects of relief, ending as they did in the blasting of his newly-raised hopes, would have brought despair to the poor seaman in his

forlorn situation ; but he assured me it did nothing of the sort. On the contrary, he said, the knowledge that he was in the direct track of vessels proceeding up Channel cheered him, and gave him fresh confidence in ultimate rescue.

A long winter's night immersed to the chin in water, and the exertion required to keep himself afloat, even with the aid afforded him, might have been supposed to be sufficient to exhaust the strength and benumb the faculties of the stoutest and hardiest ; but Clarke assured me that he felt neither cold nor fatigue throughout that dreadful night. That he was preternaturally sustained, both in body and mind, cannot be doubted. He again and again told me that from the moment he caught hold of the mast so unexpectedly, and when he stood so much in need of help, he had never wavered for an instant in his belief that his life would be spared ; and this faith gave him the strength necessary for his preservation.

The day was far advanced when a brig appeared very close to him, and pursuing a course directly for him. Again did poor Clarke raise himself on the life-buoy, waive his handkerchief, which he tore from his neck, and shout until he was hoarse, and this time not in vain. To his great delight the little vessel, when very near to him, shortened

sail, hove to, and lowered a boat ; and, in a short time, which, however, the poor fellow assured me seemed to him longer almost than all that had gone before it, he was picked up, and carried on board the brig. He said he remembered very well being lifted in the boat, but from that moment all consciousness left him. He found out afterwards, however, that he had been taken to the vessel in a state of insensibility, stripped of his wet clothes, a little spirits poured down his throat, and then placed in a warm bed. It was not long before animation returned ; but with life came fever and delirium. The vessel was bound for Plymouth, which port she reached on the following day, and then poor Clarke was transferred to the hospital, and under careful medical treatment was soon restored to reason and to health.

Such is the substance of John Clarke's narrative of his wonderful escape from death, and given almost in his own words. It is evident that, under Providence, he was indebted to his firm and abiding faith for his preservation,—a faith that never failed him for a moment, that cheered him under the most forlorn circumstances, and under repeated and bitter disappointment,—a faith which was indeed to him “the evidence of

things not seen." It was his perfect reliance on God's power and will to save him that gave him the strength and perseverance necessary for his safety. Had his faith been less strong and lively, he would have despaired in the horrors of that long, dark, November night, and perished miserably.

"*Aide toi, la ciel t'aidera*," is a sound maxim. The full confidence Clarke had in God's mercy, and his sure expectancy of ultimate deliverance from his fearful and miserable situation, did not induce him to lie supine in the water without moving a muscle in his own behalf, but, on the contrary, urged him to make those almost superhuman exertions which were the secondary and ostensible causes of his preservation.

It was impossible to reflect on my shipmate's miraculous rescue from destruction, without the mind dwelling on God's infinite mercies to man at all times, and the need which man has at all times to cry, "Lord, save me."

Clarke had prayed for deliverance from temporal death—the death of the body, and he had obtained the object of his prayer. He had striven bravely for mortal life, and his exertions had been rewarded with success.

It is happily the fate of comparatively few to

have to struggle for their lives amidst the deep waters of the ocean. It is but here and there one, who "beginning to sink," cries, "Lord, save me,"—save me from the "rushing of mighty waters." But all men may say with the Psalmist, "If the Lord himself had not been on our side, when men rose up against us; they had swallowed us up quick when they were so wrathfully displeased at us. Yea, the waters had drowned us, and the stream had gone over our soul; the deep waters of the proud had gone even over our soul."

It is from "the second death" that we should pray to be delivered, "when the sea shall give up the dead which are in it."

It is when we "are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life," that we have more need to cry, "Lord, save me," than when choked by the waters of the great deep.

It is when we feel ourselves sinking in sin; when we are unable to bear up against "the crafts and assaults of the devil;" when "the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil," are more than we can struggle against,—that we have peculiar need to cry, "Lord, save me."

And we may be assured "that those things which we ask faithfully, we shall obtain effectually;" but our faith must be evidenced in our

actions ; we must ever remember " that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

It is only " by giving up ourselves to His service, and by walking before Him in holiness and righteousness," that we may hope to be heard when we cry, " Lord, save me."

But, nevertheless, we must carefully avoid the error of the Pharisee. We must not say with him, " God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are ;" but remember that " when we shall have done all those things which are commanded," " we are unprofitable servants ; we have done that which was our duty to do ;" and, instead of trusting to our own merits, we must be ready at all times to exclaim, " Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the praise ; for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake !"



## CHAP. V.

## THE ASSIZE COURT.

"But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?"—MAL. iii. 2.

ON a very lovely evening in the summer of 1851, I took my road towards C——, a town in Ireland, situated on the banks of the river S——. I was mounted on the box of a stage-coach, one of the few then to be found in the Emerald Isle, lingering out a miserable existence on that road on which it had formerly rolled in all its "pride of place," "the observed of all observers."

It was shorn of all its ancient dignity and splendour. In place of the four blood-horses that formerly whirled it rapidly along, snorting and prancing, with manes and tails erect, and seeming to scorn the very ground they trod on, two miserable, half-starved animals, limped slowly with their load.

The shaggy, uncombed manes of the horses, their hides ignorant of curry-comb or brush; the broken, slovenly appearance of the harness,

the mud long dried upon the coach, all betokened neglect, consequent on the impoverished state of the coaching interest, fast driven from its path by the resistless power of steam.

I was seated between the driver and an old gentleman, whom I found to be a leading counsellor of the Irish bar. The coachman had been fortunate, and loaded well that day, having one or two more passengers than the law licensed him to carry — they do these things in Ireland — so I was glad to squeeze in bodkin on the box.

The snail-like pace at which we travelled would have been wearisome in the extreme under other circumstances ; but the weather was so delightful, the scenery so beautiful, and the conversation of my companions so interesting and agreeable, that I delighted to linger on my way, and grudged every smack of the whip, every cherup from the driver's lips, intended to urge our nags to accelerated speed.

On our left rolled the S —, a swift and sparkling stream, running between verdant banks, narrowing as we approached our destination, and breaking into numerous little rapids and cascades, which, if less grand than the broad expanse of water which had flowed beneath us as we crossed the long, old-fashioned, wooden bridge of W —,

made up this loss by an increase of picturesque beauty.

In the distance to our left towered the lofty mountains of C——; whilst the round, conical hill of S——, famous in the history of Irish revolt, rose boldly in our front.

To the right a diversified scene was spread before the gratified eye, of park and hamlet, wooded glen, barren hill, and cultivated field.

But why attempt to describe a landscape to which, though well worthy of the painter's pencil, my pen can do but little justice; and which, whilst it is vividly present to my mind's eye, though many thousand miles distant from my corporeal gaze, each of my readers will picture to himself in a different form?

As we rumbled slowly over the stones of the old town of C——, it was evident that something beyond the every-day routine of life in an Irish county-town was stirring. The streets, which under ordinary circumstances would have been quiet and almost deserted at the hour of our arrival, were thronged with people, gathered together in small groups, and discussing, with no little warmth and gesticulation, topics apparently of more than common interest.

I inquired of my friend the barrister the cause of the evidently unusual bustle that pervaded the

place; and he informed me that on the morrow the county assize was to open, which accounted for the mystery of his presence, "for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

My friend, a lean and shrivelled little man, with a somewhat comical expression of countenance, and sly twinkle of the deep-set grey eye, which gave increased effect to the caustic tone of his remarks, alighted at a shop where he had made arrangements for a lodging during his stay in C——; and I saw no more of him until, on the following day, I with difficulty recognised him in all the pride and pomp of wig and gown. Less fortunate, I had to take mine ease in mine inn; and so crowded was the town, that I was forced to content myself with a dirty little attic, about six feet by five, wherein to bestow myself and carpet bag for the night.

Having washed the dust and perspiration from my face, arranged my travel-stained garments to some effect, and refreshed the inward man, I sallied forth to study the topography of the place. I passed through narrow, dirty, and ill-paved streets; I glanced into filthy courts and alleys; I looked down upon underground cellars, the abodes of squalid wretchedness. Again, I came to hand-

some houses, standing within well-kept gardens,—Lazarus and Dives side by side. Here I gazed on some old crumbling wall, a half-ruined archway, or overhanging gable,—emblems of a by-gone age. There, the fortified barrack, the county prison with its high walls, and the prison-like union workhouse, attracted my attention, and spoke of the present, its folly, vice, and misery.

The sound of instrumental music caught my ear, and I hurried on in the direction of the sound. A large round tent or pavilion, with gay flags streaming from the top, was erected in a meadow by the road side, near the entrance of the town. It was from this spot the strains which had attracted my steps proceeded. I inquired of a bystander the nature of the performance within; and was told that a troop of equestrians had established a circus, and held high revel there. I advanced to the barrier erected before the entrance of the tent, paid the price demanded for admission, and joined the pleased and motley throng assembled beneath the canvas.

There was little to be seen or heard that had not been familiar to me from boyhood. There was the painted face, the tinselled dress, the clown and Mr. Merriman with their old, stale jokes, and witless buffoonery. There were the

nimble tumbler vaulting from his spring-board, the Amazonian queen, and the sylph-like child. And there was the docile and well-trained horse, with grave and sedate countenance, taking his share in the follies of the moment, and looking, methought, as if his noble nature rebelled against the unworthy part he was enacting, as if he really blushed at the "fantastic tricks" his master obliged him to perform.

Some half-dozen brazen instruments, with one or two flageolets and pipes, seemed vying to out-do each other in noise, and scrambling which should take the lead; whilst a sturdy big-drum brought up the rear, and by his burly voice endeavoured to drown the squeaking and grunting of his companions, and to harmonise and keep them together.

A merry, lively polka was the result of their ill-combined but strenuous efforts, which, joined to the shouts and laughter of the crowd, made the tent ring again. Noisy, careless mirth was the genius of the scene.

I was soon tired of my company. The heated and foul atmosphere consequent upon the crowding of so many people in a small space, was oppressive. I passed into the cool night air. The long summer twilight had struggled bravely against

the moon's pale beams, but now she reigned supreme.

As I pursued my way to the inn, which was to contain, not accommodate, me for the night, I re-passed the gaol. Its dismal portals frowned beneath the shade cast by the moon rising behind its lofty walls. Its dreary aspect had assumed a yet deeper gloom in the pale light. Within its walls beat many anxious and perturbed hearts. The morrow would see several of them standing at the bar of man's justice to plead for their lives. Yet a few more morrows, and some of them would probably stand at the bar of Eternal Justice to receive their final doom.

The inharmonious music of the circus still haunted my ear; the jests of the clown, the rude mirth of the spectators, were yet present to my mind. The contrast was striking and sad. It was but reasonable to suppose that many of that thoughtless crowd might, ere their earthly career terminated, know the chilling, heart-crushing effect of prison walls; might look forward with gloomy apprehension to the ordeal the morrow would call upon them to encounter. It was certain that all must pass "the bourn from whence no traveller returns," that all must one day "stand before the judgment seat of Christ;" and how were they prepared to face that dread tribunal?

With a depressed and saddened spirit, I sought my resting-place, and threw myself upon the mean and dirty bed prepared for me; but the heat of the little room, and the train of thought which had taken possession of my mind, kept me from sleeping.

I arose early on the morrow, little refreshed by my night's rest; and having made my toilet, and partaken of an excellent breakfast, of which fresh eggs, butter, and milk, such as Ireland only can produce, formed the chief luxuries, I strolled into the town, and my steps, almost involuntarily, were directed towards the court-house.

Although it wanted a good hour of the time when the court was to open, a considerable number of people were assembled before its doors. The crowd consisted almost entirely of the lower orders, and amongst them females greatly predominated.

I lounged about amongst them, catching here and there a chance word. It was clear that they were mostly parties interested in the coming trials, who had friends or relatives amongst the unhappy criminals about to be arraigned, or were there to give evidence for or against them.

After a little while there was an evident stir and sensation amongst the throng. The police, as fine a military body as it has ever been my



good fortune to look upon, stood to their arms, and closed in upon an entrance door beneath the body of the court, and which I found to lead to a strong-room in which the prisoners were confined, pending their appearance in the dock. Presently the trampling of horses' feet, and the noise of wheels was heard, and that forbidding, hearse-like vehicle, the prison van, made its appearance, escorted by a numerous body of constables.

As it drove within the gates of the iron railing which surrounded the court-house, the people swarmed about it and seemed anxious to enter with it; but the police kept them back, and they were obliged to content themselves by climbing upon the railing to catch a hasty glance at their friends as they alighted one by one from the carriage, and passed between a double row of armed police to the door before mentioned.

Many were the hurried cries of "Good luck to you, Pat!" "God save ye, Terence!" and the like, as husband, son, or brother, passed rapidly by. And many were the shrieks and wailings that burst from the spectators, as those dear to them entered within the melancholy portal, possibly only to repossess it on their way to the fatal tree.

Half an hour, perhaps, had elapsed from the time of the van setting down its last melancholy

load ; for, ample as were its accommodations, it had to make three trips before it had transferred all the inmates of the gaol to the scene of their trial, when a fresh movement was to be observed amongst the populace. Presently a trumpeter of the —th Lancers, mounted on a gallant grey steed, dashed up to the court-house, and sounded a loud blast, as it seemed of defiance, before its gates. Then came a party of javelin men, and then the sheriff's carriage, containing the judge who was to preside at the coming solemn scene. Many a heart amongst the crowd felt an involuntary tremor as that old man descended the step of the carriage, and proceeded to take his place on the judgment seat.

I followed a number of persons into the court set apart for criminal trials, and took my place opposite the jury-box, so as to command at once a good view of the prisoners at the bar, the judge on the bench, and the witnesses and pleaders on both sides. In less than ten minutes the judge made his appearance, and took his seat with much gravity, amidst the respectful salutations of the gentlemen of the bar.

He was a tall, portly, venerable-looking man, of dignified demeanour, and calm but impassive expression of countenance. His high forehead

was but little wrinkled for his age ; and in the full, light-blue eyes one might read that the most impartial justice would be meted out, but that the guilty felon would have little to hope for from his compassion, beyond what the merciful construction and practice of the law might promise.

The court was opened in due form, a jury empannelled, and some cases of no great public interest were proceeded with.

A little boy was tried for stealing some clothes, found guilty on the clearest evidence, and sentenced to be imprisoned for two months, and to be twice privately whipped. The little fellow had stood his trial with considerable fortitude, only giving vent at times to a half suppressed whimper ; but when he heard the sentence pronounced on him, his courage quite forsook him, and he cried and bellowed lustily, being joined in his wailings by a woman at the entrance of the court, who was probably his mother.

He begged hard for mercy, and that the latter part of his punishment might be remitted at all events ; but it was all in vain, and amidst his tears and lamentations he was removed from the bar to make room for the next culprit on the list, a stout, good-looking young woman, but of rather masculine expression.

This person was convicted of robbing and wounding a soldier, in company with others not in custody, and sentenced to seven years transportation.

I, who was pretty close to her, and watched her countenance narrowly, could see that she was much cast down on hearing her sentence; but she was obdurate beyond her years, and quickly recovering herself she launched forth into a torrent of foul invective and ribald abuse of judge and jury, and all present; and with impious oaths that made one's blood curdle, she was forcibly removed from the dock, and thrust below.

The trial of the day was now to come on. It was one of those foul agrarian outrages so common in some parts of Ireland. A "caretaker" had been set upon by a gang of blood-thirsty ruffians, and murdered, his head having been literally beaten to pieces.

Although eight or ten men had been engaged in this atrocity, and it was done within sight and hearing of several persons in no way connected with the murderers, yet but three men stood at the bar to take their trial for the offence,—so difficult is it to obtain evidence in a country where the witness of to-day may be the victim of to-morrow,—so easy is it for criminals to escape

when the mass of the population is tainted, and makes common cause with them.

The three men at the bar were strikingly contrasted with each other in appearance and manner. One was a spare, middle-sized man of fifty-five or sixty years of age, his hair quite grey, and countenance deeply lined. There was nothing in his expression to stamp him as a murderer; on the contrary, under other circumstances, and in a different position, one would have been disposed to set him down as a mild and inoffensive person.

Next to him stood a tall, stout-built, powerful-looking man of about twenty-eight or thirty. His features were regular, even handsome; but there was a fierce, vindictive expression in his dark eyes that almost made one quail before his glance. His head was covered with a profusion of thickly-matted, curly, black hair, and he wore a quantity of beard and whiskers. On entering the dock, he had drawn himself up to his full height, and gazed around him with a fixed and determined air, and with a forbidding scowl upon his brow; and he maintained this proud attitude and demeanour during the whole continuance of the trial, betraying no outward sign of emotion even when evidence the most damning was produced against him.

He was the man to lead a forlorn hope, or be foremost in a boarding-party; but one would scarcely have thought one possessing apparently so much courage and determination could be a cowardly assassin.

The third who stood at that bar was a youth of not more than eighteen or nineteen years old. It is probable that the usual expression of his features was mild and prepossessing, his figure rather above the middle size and well proportioned; but terror had so drawn and distorted his face, and his form was so bowed and bent, as with trembling knees and quivering hands he leant, or rather crouched, against the side of the dock, that it was impossible to do more than guess at his natural appearance.

His face was ashy pale, his lips bloodless, a damp, cold sweat rested on his brow, and a nervous twitching affected every feature and limb. Never did I behold a picture of more abject fear. One's pity was almost swallowed up in contempt; and one felt that, if a murderer, he had sadly mistaken his calling, for those who "haste to shed blood" should at least possess a share of brute courage to fit them for their trade.

All three prisoners pleaded not guilty; they did so by an interpreter, as none of them spoke more than a few words of English. The two first

spoke distinctly enough, but it was with much difficulty the plea of the last could be ascertained ; and it was thought at first that he had confessed himself guilty of the crime he stood charged with, and thrown himself upon the mercy of the court. Such, however, was not the case.

The counsel for the prosecution opened the case with a clear statement of the leading particulars of the murder, and then called his witnesses. An attempt was made by the prisoners' counsel to shake their evidence ; but, though he displayed much ingenuity, he totally failed to discredit their testimony.

The guilt of all the parties seemed to be very clearly established. At times, facts were deposed to of a startling and abhorrent nature, even amidst the dark and bloody transaction which formed the subject of inquiry.

It was curious to watch the demeanour of the culprits during the progress of the trial, and more especially when the evidence told directly against either individual.

The youngest man seemed totally incapable of paying any attention to what was passing before him. From first to last, he was so overwhelmed by fear as to be incapable of thoroughly understanding even the cause and grounds of that fear

itself. It might be said of him that "in the midst of life he was in death;" for he was evidently dead to all sense of everything about him: only an ill-defined feeling of dread had possession of his soul.

The elderly man paid great attention to the proceedings, and occasionally made some observations in an under tone to the interpreter, who communicated them to his advocate. Except that at times, when some point of the evidence bore peculiarly hard upon him, a livid hue overspread his countenance for a moment, he maintained a quiet fortitude.

The other prisoner bore himself proudly throughout the trial. But it might be observed that, whenever a witness deposed to anything which went to inculcate him more immediately, the dark brow darkened, the scowl became more intense, and the eye flashed with increased fierceness. He spoke not a word during the whole day, but every now and then his lips moved as if muttering to himself, and then he clenched his teeth more rigidly than before. His hands rested, for the most part, on the rail which ran across the front of the dock; and I could plainly perceive, by the swelling of the veins and muscles, that when particularly excited he grasped it with con-



vulsive energy, and a force that might have been felt "through bars of iron or triple steel."

It was evident that he was keenly alive to the danger of his position, and that, despite of the nerve and hardihood which enabled him to wear a bold front, fear sat cold at his heart.

The evidence for the prosecution having been gone through, the prisoners' counsel made an able and eloquent speech in their behalf. He threw doubts upon the honesty of some witnesses, and the correctness of others. He entreated the jury to give the prisoners the benefit of any doubts they might entertain, and made a moving appeal to their compassionate feelings on behalf of the grey hairs of the eldest, and the youth of the youngest; he even spoke of "manhood's prime," and hinted at the valuable services that might be rendered to the state by one of such stalwart mould and gallant bearing—the evidence against the second prisoner had been of the most conclusive nature, and went to show aggravated guilt—but he sat down without calling a single witness in support of his clients.

The learned judge summed up with perfect calmness and lucidity, and with strict impartiality. He explained the law to the jury, and pointed out to them every tittle of evidence that was of a

nature in the least to favour the prisoners ; but it was evident that they had nothing to hope from his view of their case.

The jury retired for forty minutes—it seemed to have been the general opinion in court that they would have delivered their verdict without quitting the jury-box, so clearly had the guilt of all three culprits been brought home to them, so evident was the opinion entertained by the venerable judge of the merits of the case—and then re-entered the court, and pronounced a verdict of guilty against the two elder prisoners, but acquitted the younger one.

A hum of surprise, if not disapproval, was heard throughout the court at this strange finding ; for it was clear to all beyond the magic influence of the jury-box, that no case whatever had been made out to warrant such a decision respecting the young man. But juries—Irish juries more especially—are not infallible. It should appear that his youth, or coward-fear, or the eloquence of his defender, had blinded their judgment.

To no one in court did his acquittal seem to give more astonishment than to the young man himself. The delivery of the verdict had aroused him from the state bordering upon lethargy in which he had long been. His powers of compre-

hension seemed to return to him for a moment ; he heard, and understood fully, the altered circumstances in which he was placed, — the fact that his life was spared as by a miracle, — then his poor remains of fortitude gave way, and he fell heavily to the ground, in a deep swoon.

Water was dashed over him, and a lady—for there were ladies in court—passed her smelling-bottle to him ; and he was soon restored to his senses, and placed, by the judge's direction, in front of the dock.

The venerable man now addressed to him a short but impressive speech, pointing out how his life had been restored to him, as it were, on the very brink of the grave, by the merciful interposition of Providence—he did not say by the stupidity and weakness of the jury ; but I could not but fancy the charge was meant as much for a reprimand to them, by a sort of side wind, as for the edification of the young man at the bar—and concluded his address in the words of our Lord, “Go, and sin no more.”

The speech was a very admirable one, and might have its effect upon many present ; but I question if the person to whom it was particularly addressed was capable of understanding it. His mind had been so shattered by the proceedings of

the day, that he was unable apparently to comprehend anything beyond the fact of his unexpected respite from the grave.

The young man was now removed from the dock, and given over to his friends; and the two convicted felons were called on to say if they had anything to urge why sentence of death should not be passed upon them.

The elder merely requested that his body might be given to his friends,—a poor favour, which the law, however, forbade the judge to grant him. The younger man said not a word.

The judge now placed on his head the black cap,—emblem of the doom to be pronounced,—and passed sentence on them in the usual form, and without holding out a hope of mercy in this world; though he besought them most earnestly to use the short time that would be allowed to them, to endeavour to make their peace with heaven, to prepare for eternity.

I watched both prisoners closely during this appalling scene. The old man only betrayed his emotion by the nervous quivering of his upper lip, and tremulous motion of his hands. He was deadly pale, but stood firmly, eyed the judge steadily, and uttered no sound.

The younger man still continued to master his

feelings in a great degree; but the wild, haggard expression of his eyes, the deep flush that suffused his cheeks, and the drops of perspiration that stood upon his forehead, betrayed too plainly his inward agony.

They were removed from the bar. On earth there was no more "fearful looking for judgment" for them. The sentence of "fiery indignation" had gone forth.

I looked around me at the mixed crowd who had witnessed their condemnation, and who were now, with bated breath and saddened visage, preparing to quit the court. There was not a man there who did not betray signs of awe and fear in his countenance, however some might endeavour to disguise their real feelings under the garb of levity.

I withdrew from the court. I took my way slowly homewards, pondering on the melancholy and solemn scene I had witnessed. I thought how a few words from the lips of an aged man, mortal like myself, had struck a chill and dismay into every breast. I reflected how the sentence passed upon the criminals, so far as their mortal nature was concerned, and man had power over them, would at most inflict a brief terror, and then a momentary pang. And I asked myself the

question, if such a fallible tribunal, where I have just seen one guilty one out of three sent scathless into the world again; if words from man's mouth, and the thought of a passing agony, can have power thus to oppress and cast down the hearts of the boldest, how may we hope to encounter the dread tribunal before whom all created men—past, present, and to come—must one day appear? how face that perfect, infallible, and omnipotent Judge, “unto whom all hearts be open,” “and from whom no secrets are hid?” how endure the sentence, “Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?”

Truly, “Who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?” And yet men live from day to day as if there were no final judgment to be expected; as if this world would last for ever, or there were no other to come; and I said, with Nicodemus, “How can these things be?”

## CHAP. VI.

## THE FUGITIVE.

"Whither shall I go then from thy spirit; or whither shall I go then from thy presence?"—Psalm cxxxix. 6.

THAT "murder will out," is an opinion which has been so often verified in the most extraordinary manner, that the saying has passed into a proverb. And although I can remember many atrocious crimes which as yet remain shrouded in mystery, it may be that the exception only proves the rule.

After the deepest cunning and foresight have been exhibited in destroying every trace and vestige that might seem by possibility likely to betray the bloody secret, some trifling circumstance, far too insignificant to have attracted the observation of the murderer—his mind occupied in guarding against the more immediate and obvious means of discovery—has led to his detection.

In some cases, after all the efforts of the police have failed to find a clue to the perpetrator of

some fell deed, the burden of concealment has proved in the end too heavy for him to bear.

“Conscience makes cowards of us all;”

and under its all-powerful influence, and against every effort and wish of the criminal, it has compelled him to make confession of his guilt.

A very singular case of this nature once came under my own observation, whilst resident in one of our North American colonies some years since.

I was strolling carelessly through the woods, a gun over my shoulder, but more intent upon admiring the sylvan beauties of the scene than the pursuit of game, which, scared by the approach of the white man, had become very scarce in the part of the country I then resided in, when I came suddenly upon a little log hut, or shanty.

It was so embosomed amidst the tall trees of the forest, that I might have passed within a few hundred yards of it without it attracting my observation; nevertheless it gave shelter to a somewhat numerous family. Two or three healthy-looking, but ragged and uncombed urchins, were playing before the door as I approached; but no sooner did they see me than they fled precipitately into the hut, more frightened apparently by my presence than if a bear or wolf had appeared before them.



No sooner had they gained the shelter of their backwood fastness, however, than they came peeping slyly from its entrance at the armed stranger ; and, in place of the two or three rosy faces that had at first attracted my observation, some eight or ten of various sizes were to be seen all huddled together, and seemingly half alarmed at my approach.

As I reached the door, a middle-aged and very respectable-looking woman came forth to meet me, and, after a few words of civil greeting, said she was very glad to see me, for a poor sick man was lying in an inner room, dying she feared, and that he seemed to have something on his mind of a terrible nature which he dared not reveal, and yet could scarce conceal.

She told me that, about ten or twelve days before, her husband was chopping in the wood about half a mile from their shanty, when he heard something rustle amongst the branches a few yards from him ; and, thinking it was a deer, he seized his gun from where it rested against a log hard by him, and advanced cautiously in the direction of the noise.

Presently he saw something amidst the thick foliage, which, from its appearance, he took to be a bear standing erect on its hind legs, and

bringing his gun quickly to his shoulder, was about to fire, when the creature uttered a piercing shriek, and rushed into the heart of the forest.

The voice and motion immediately convinced him that it was no bear he was about to shoot, but a human being ; and rejoicing that he had made this discovery in time to avoid fatal consequences, he pursued the fugitive with all his might, wondering what could induce him thus to shun him.

The pursuit was not a long one. Entangled amongst the brushwood, the stranger shortly fell ; and though he recovered his feet almost immediately, it was but to fall again from exhaustion a few yards further on, and there, groaning and moaning pitifully, the woodman overtook him.

The appearance of the poor creature before him was such as might well excuse the mistake which had well nigh cost him his life. His head was covered with a profusion of tangled and matted hair of raven black, save where a few white hairs intruded, and the bronzed and weather-beaten face was half covered with beard and whiskers of the same ebon hue. His eyes were black and lustrous, but sunken ; and his whole countenance greatly emaciated. His dress, if dress it could be called, which was shredded as if it had been subjected to the action of a card-

ing-machine, consisted of a suit of black cloth, a white shirt sadly soiled, and the remains of a pair of Wellington boots, through which his naked toes protruded. His hands were brown and hairy, and, viewed closely, his resemblance to Bruin was strikingly great.

It was some time, the woman said, before her husband could get a word from the stranger's lips; but he lay groaning and trembling before him, as if he still feared mischief at his hands. He put down his gun, and assuring him he was with one who would not harm him, but, on the contrary, would gladly contribute to the alleviation of his evident wants, he drew from him at last that he was an Englishman, that he had lost himself in the forest, and had not tasted food for many days. Why he fled he would not explain; but it was evident he was suffering as much from mental disquietude as from physical debility.

When at last he was prevailed upon to rise, he was so weak he could scarce stand upon his feet; and it was with great difficulty that, half leaning on, half carried by the woodman, he was brought at length to the hut. No sooner had he reached it than he fainted, and remained insensible so long, that at first they thought he never would awake to consciousness; but by chafing his hands

and temples with whisky, and pouring a little down his throat, they managed to restore animation; and then they fed him very cautiously with some broth, which seemed to revive him greatly, and after a little time he fell into a deep sleep.

After sleeping tranquilly for several hours he began to start and turn uneasily on the bed, and to groan and mutter to himself. At last he began to call out aloud, as if in the extremity of terror; perhaps he fancied himself in the forest again, and the woodman pursuing him with his gun; and then he sat upright, opened his eyes, and gazed about him wildly, with every appearance of surprise and alarm.

A few kind words soothed him, and he seemed to be aware of how he came into his present abode. The woman fed him again, and he once more dropped off to sleep, but still seemed uneasy and disturbed.

The next day he appeared decidedly better, and was able to sit up. She took off his old rags, washed him thoroughly, and dressed him in a suit of her husband's clothes. He was very gentle, quite child-like in his manner, suffering her to do with him as she thought fit; but he would give no other account of himself than he had given to her good man when he first found

him. He neither said where he came from, nor whither he was journeying. Perhaps he thought he had already reached his journey's end, so far as this world was concerned.

In his pockets she had found a few copper coins, and an old leathern purse, containing a few dollars in silver. There was also a common buckhorn-handled knife, and a mourning ring wrapped up in part of an old newspaper; and about these the poor wanderer seemed very anxious, whilst the money he took no heed of.

For several days after his arrival at the hut he had been able to sit up, and to play with the younger children, of whom he seemed remarkably fond, as they were evidently of him; but for the last three or four days he had not left his bed, and appeared sinking fast. Though quite sensible and calm when awake, his sleep seemed always troubled by frightful dreams, and he commonly awoke from it with shrieks and screams of terror.

His manner remained gentle and mild as ever, but nothing could overcome his taciturnity. He did not so much refuse to give an account of himself, as cautiously evade all questions that might seem to lead to the subject; and the good woman said they could not bear to press him much, he seemed so near his last.

I felt greatly interested in the account given of the stranger, and, at the woman's request, followed her into the inner room where he then was. He was sleeping quietly when I entered, and I had an opportunity of examining his features narrowly. He could not be more than four or five and twenty at the most, though sickness, exposure to the elements, and the workings of fiery passions, perhaps, gave him at first sight the appearance of a man several years older. His features were decidedly handsome, though wasted by famine and disease, and, as he slept calmly, had a mild and pleasing expression.

There was an old cicatrice, of a contused wound apparently, over the left temple, and the mark of a cut about an inch and a half long across his throat.

As I stood gazing thoughtfully on him his brow began to contract, his lips to compress themselves, and then to utter some indistinct sounds. He turned two or three times restlessly in his bed, started, and, with a cry of wild alarm, awoke.

My presence by his bedside seemed at first to cause him great uneasiness and trepidation; but the woman assured him I was a doctor come to restore him to health—a little harmless invention

of the good woman's to lull his fears, for I was entirely ignorant of the healing art— and by degrees he became composed again.

I sat down by the poor fellow's pillow, and began to talk to him on the subject of his illness, and touched slightly on the propriety of making known to his friends the situation he was in; but, though he seemed conscious of his precarious state, I could not induce him to make the slightest reference to his connections, or the place from whence he came.

I had not been long in the hut, when the woodman himself returned from his labour, and confirmed all that his wife had previously told me; and, before leaving, it was arranged that on the following day he should span his oxen, and propping the poor invalid with pillows and blankets, so as to save him as much as possible from the jolting of the wagon, he should convey him to my abode, distant some twelve or fifteen miles, where he would not only have the advantage of a more spacious apartment, and more suitable diet than the good people who had taken compassion on him could offer, but might also have the benefit of medical attendance.

It seemed but fair, also, to the poor people whose scanty means had been so freely shared

with him, and whose best bed he had occupied, to relieve them of a burden they were but ill able to bear.

The removal took place as agreed upon, and happily without any apparent mischief to the poor sufferer. Indeed, after he had been put to bed, and had enjoyed several hours of sound repose, he seemed much renovated. The woodman told me that on quitting his shanty he had wished to give him the whole contents of his purse, but that he had refused to accept any remuneration for what he considered as a simple act of Christian duty,—conduct highly honourable to both parties.

I had sent for the medical gentleman who visited in the scantily peopled district in which I lived, and the next morning he arrived, and carefully examined the state of my poor protégé. He at once told me that there was no hope, that he was past human aid, although it was not unlikely he might linger some little time before life became extinct.

There was that in the manner and tone of the stranger that convinced me he had come of respectable parentage, and had had the benefit of a liberal education; and even the tattered remains of his clothes, and the texture of his shirt, went to prove the same thing.



His manners were so gentle, and he seemed so grateful for the services rendered him, that my heart was insensibly drawn towards him. He knew that he was dying, and seemed perfectly resigned to his fate; it was only during sleep that symptoms of mental perturbation were still to be observed in him, and even then the paroxysms were less violent, and at longer intervals, than when I had first met with him.

By degrees he relaxed something of his reserve, and led me to infer, rather than informed me, that he was of a respectable English family, and that he had come to America with a view of bettering his fortunes. Beyond this, and the fact he had before disclosed, that he had lost himself in the forest and wandered many days without food or shelter, I could glean nothing respecting him.

He had been more than a fortnight under my roof when he evinced a restlessness of manner I had not before observed in him. He was evidently sinking fast; and rightly guessing he had some weighty secret he wished to disburden his mind of, I took occasion to allude to his failing state, and suggest, with all possible tenderness, that he should lose no time in communicating anything he had to disclose, or of giving any

directions he might be desirous of leaving behind him.

He remained silent and thoughtful for some little time; then, putting his hand within the bosom of his shirt, drew forth the paper parcel before alluded to, and which he had never suffered to be out of his possession for a moment from the time he regained the use of his faculties in the woodman's hut.

He unfolded the paper with a slight shudder; and, carefully replacing the knife and ring within his shirt, pointed to a paragraph at the bottom of one of the columns, and requested me to read it.

The paper was so soiled and greasy from being long carried about his person, that I found some little difficulty in deciphering the passage he had called my attention to. It was headed "Barbarous Outrage," and ran as follows:—

"One of those brutal outrages which make us sometimes half doubt whether we are the inhabitants of a Christian land, or living in the midst of paganism, was perpetrated on Friday evening last, on the W—— road, and not above a mile from the little village of C——.

"Mr. H——, one of the most wealthy and respectable farmers in that district, was returning from W—— market in his gig, accompanied by

his son, Mr. W. H——, a young man of about three-and-twenty, when they were set upon by four ruffians, one of whom seized the horse's head, and cut the reins close to the bit, whilst the others dragged the two gentlemen from the gig, and beat them frightfully about the head with stones, after which they cut their throats, and having rifled their pockets, and taken from the elder gentleman a pocket-book, containing bank notes to a very large amount, decamped, leaving their victims for dead upon the road.

“The alarm was first given by the empty chaise arriving at Mr. H——'s house, when several men, with lanthorns, were sent out on the road to W——, whence it was supposed the horse must have come, and after proceeding nearly five miles, discovered the two unfortunate men lying, weltering in their blood, within a few paces of each other.

“The elder gentleman was quite dead; the younger showed some signs of life, and was immediately carried to the ‘White Lion,’ in C——, where medical assistance was promptly rendered to him. The body of his father lies there awaiting a coroner's inquest, to be held this day.

“The young man is in a very precarious state, and it is not probable he will be able to give his

evidence before the jury for some days at least. He has, however, made a statement before T. F——n, Esq., one of the county magistrates, to the effect, that as they were proceeding home from market, at a quiet pace, four men sprang from the hedge on the off side of the road, and rushed upon them, calling on them to resist at their peril. One man caught the horse's bridle, and instantly cut the reins,—for he was driving at the time, and felt them severed under his hands. Two of the men seized him at the same moment, attempted to drag him from his seat; but he jumped out, and began to wrestle stoutly with one, when the other struck him with a stone over the left eye, and from that moment he became insensible.

“ Before he was struck down, he saw the fourth man attack his father, who called to him, ‘ Stand to them, Bill ! never fear.’ ”

“ The men all wore crape over their faces, which prevented his distinguishing their features; but he described the dress and figures of three of them, and of one so accurately, that there is little doubt the police will soon have him in custody.

“ Two men have been already arrested on suspicion of being concerned in this savage affair. They are known to have been drinking in Harris's

beer-shop in C——, until within about half an hour of the time when the murder was perpetrated, and their appearance corresponds with that of two of the villains.

“It is hoped the ends of justice will not be defeated in this instance, but that all four miscreants will, ere long, be brought to condign punishment.

“Mr. H——, the father, was upwards of sixty-seven years of age, and very much crippled by gout. He was formerly a very powerful man, and would have been found an awkward customer for any one man to handle.”

Such was the statement contained in the old newspaper, so carefully preserved, and which bore date about eighteen months prior to the day of my perusing it.

I handed it to the invalid with an inquiring look, to which he replied by silently touching the scars on his temple and throat. “Your name is W. H——,” I exclaimed; “it was your father who was so barbarously murdered?” “It was,” he replied faintly, whilst his whole frame was visibly agitated by the remembrance of the fearful tragedy.

Poor fellow, my heart bled for him. Here was indeed a sufficient solution of whatever

might have appeared strange and mysterious about him. Reason herself was shaken in her seat, apparently. It was no time to talk more upon the subject; he was already exhausted by what had passed. I pressed his hand, and left him.

The next day found me again standing by the bed-side of the invalid. Death was written legibly on his brow; but before his victim yielded to the dread tyrant, he evidently had more he wished to communicate. He produced the ring and knife from his bosom. The former contained some of his father's hair, cut from his head after death at his desire, and placed in the ring made for it. The knife, he said, was that with which the bloody deed had been committed.

As he seemed evidently disposed to enter more fully into the transaction than he had hitherto done, I ventured to ask him whether the anticipations of the writer of the paragraph had been verified? whether the perpetrators of the crime had been discovered and brought to justice? He shook his head, and then said, "That in spite of all appearances against the men first arrested, they had been released, and the crime remained a mystery to the present moment; but," he shortly added, "it must yet be divulged."

He then took the knife, and pointed to a mark scratched on the handle. It was rudely done; but the initials W.H. might be clearly traced. I looked on him with amazement. He set his teeth firmly, grinned at me like a maniac, and then shrieking out, "I did it!" fell back on his pillow, seemingly lifeless.

He rallied again after a time, and calling up all his dying energies, bit by bit, and in broken, disjointed sentences, made a confession, which I shall embody in the following narrative.

His father was a wealthy man, and his home comfortable enough; but although kind and affectionate in the main, the old man was close and niggardly with regard to money matters, and always kept him short; so that for some time he had felt an increasing desire for his father's death, that he might come in for his share of his property.

That day at W — he had wanted to obtain some money from his father, but the old gentleman would only supply him with a small part of the sum he required. This had vexed and irritated him, and knowing that his father had cash about him to a considerable amount, he was resolved to possess himself of it at all hazards.

Having once, as he said, admitted the devil

into his mind, he was ready enough to prompt the mode of most safely executing his cruel purpose. Before leaving W —, he put a large stone into his right-hand coat pocket, with the intent to use it at any moment most convenient on their road home. On their way they passed the two men who were subsequently arrested for the murder, and he noted their dresses very carefully, with a view to charge them ultimately with the deed. He could have sworn, also, easily to their faces ; but this would not have suited him, as he had no wish to bring the matter forward in a court of justice, where the tables might be turned against him ; he only desired to throw suspicion on others, so as to screen himself.

Shortly after passing these two men, it being quite dusk, and a lonely part of the road, he drew the stone suddenly from his pocket and struck his father violently on the head with it, knocking him out of the gig ; after which he jumped out, and beat him with it until he was insensible, when he cut his throat, and rifled his pockets of their contents.

His father turned one wild, anxious glance on him as he lay extended on his back in the road, and exclaimed, "My God, Bill ! what's this ?" The stone descended on his head in reply, and he



never uttered another word. But the glance of the dying old man, and the few words already spoken, were ever present to his murderer's mind until his dying hour. Waking or sleeping, the ghastly vision was ever before his eyes, to drive him to despair and madness.

The horse, a quiet, steady animal, stood still in the middle of the road. It became necessary to disguise his share in the bloody business, and, quick as lightning, the means were presented to his mind.

He first ran and hid the money in a bank hard by; then returning, cut the horse's reins close to the bit, struck him with the whip, and started him off in a trot, throwing the whip under the wheel as the gig passed him; and it was afterwards picked up, broken, on the road.

The most difficult part of the matter was to be performed; but his invention failed him not. He wounded the inside of his fingers on both hands with the knife, as if he had grasped the blade in his own defence, and so as to account fully for the blood on his hands and dress. He then made a slight wound on his throat, and threw the instrument far from him over the hedge, near where his father lay.

He now summoned all his fortitude, and arm-

ing himself with the stone with which he had already destroyed his aged parent, he struck himself several blows on the left temple, and fell in the road bathed in his own blood, and partially insensible from the injuries he had inflicted on himself.

When found by his father's servants he affected to be very much worse than he really was ; and so well did he act his part, so severely had he wounded himself, that even the medical attendants were deceived, and considered him for some time in a very dangerous state.

The road was dry and hard at the time of this occurrence, and the spot he had selected was covered with loose stones, so that the impression of feet could not be traced, and thus the absence of these marks excited no suspicion.

In the course of search, whilst he was yet confined to a sick bed, the knife was picked up, and immediately identified by him as one he had in his pocket the night of the outrage.

It had been his intention to have taken the money himself from the place where he had hidden it, as soon as the first excitement should have passed over ; but here even fortune seemed to play into his hands. A boy, bird's-nesting, happened to stumble over it : it was recognised as

that taken from the deceased farmer, and given over to his son.

Thus far his villany had been most successful. He walked with handkerchief to his eyes as chief mourner at his father's funeral. The will was opened, and he was an executor; and besides a large share of the property being left directly to him, he was declared residuary legatee.

His mother and two sisters lived with him, and for a short time all went quietly enough. He was master over all, his means were ample, the desire of his heart seemed fulfilled. But happiness, peace of mind, were far from him; they had fled for ever on that fatal night when the guilty desire of his heart had been obtained.

He had offered an ample reward for the apprehension and conviction of his father's murderers. He had put on deep mourning; he wore a ring with his deceased parent's hair in it on his finger. He had a neat tablet placed in the village church to commemorate his irreparable loss, and his filial affection. All the proprieties of life had been strictly attended to. Suspicion never so much as glanced at him; but no sooner had he "killed and also taken possession," — no sooner was he firmly established in the position his guilty deed had obtained for him,—before the first gloss

had faded from his mourning suit, a dread of his crime being discovered took entire hold of his mind, and poisoned all his enjoyment.

Careworn and anxious,—dreading to find an officer of justice in every man he met,—he turned what property he could into money, and, without making known his intention to any one, suddenly took ship for America.

Having put the broad Atlantic between him and his crime, he thought to breathe more freely; but no, conscience was his accuser, — an evil heart his tormentor; he could not fly from them. He went from city to city, he plunged deeply into debauchery, he tried in intemperance and riotous living to drown the remembrance of his foul deed, to banish the spectre that haunted him from his sight; but all was in vain.

His constitution sinking under the excesses he had indulged in, he became each day more nervous and timid. He was frightened at his own shadow. He could not bear to be alone, his thoughts became a hell to him; he dreaded the approach of man; he feared each person he saw would discover his guilty secret, or would prove to be an officer of justice sent to dog his steps.

In his agony and fear, one sole idea took possession of his mind. He imagined himself to be

closely tracked by the police; and ceasing to indulge in the wild pleasures in which he had at first sought to find enjoyment, and forgetfulness of the past, his whole time was devoted to endeavouring to elude an unreal pursuit. He went from town to town, he dodged from alley to alley, he never slept twice in one place; till at last, in the excess of his terror, he fled into the woods, and losing himself, wandered many days without food, until he was discovered by the woodman. And even in the famishing state in which he then was, he would have fled still further had strength permitted him, rather than encounter the dreaded face of man.

And all this time no mortal heart had harboured a suspicion against him. His mother and sisters were mourning his unexplained absence; and he might have returned to his native land, and his father's house, to receive the kindest welcome, instead of being given over to the stern hands of the law.

His guilty conscience alone pursued him, but there was no escaping from it. There was not throughout the wide globe a single spot where he could hide from it.

The curse of Cain was on him, and he might say with him, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold thou hast driven me out

this day from the face of the earth ; and from thy face shall I be hid ; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth ; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

An evil conscience will be ever present to scourge us, let us flee where we may ; ay, though we should " begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, cover us."

The above confession, briefly as I have given it, took the dying wretch a long time to deliver. It was evident he was well aware his last hour on earth had arrived ; and he was resolved to make the only poor atonement in his power for his enormous guilt, by making a full statement of all the particulars of his crime before his lips should be sealed for ever in death.

He spoke not of forgiveness ; he seemed to imagine that there could be no mercy shown to guilt like his ; that the parricide was placed beyond the pale of even Divine grace. But his despair, if such it was, was of a quiet, subdued nature. The mere disburdening his mind to a fellow-man, after carrying the dreadful secret with him for eighteen long months, was an evident relief to him. In fact, such had been the intensity of his mental agony for months past, that his mortal

nature was almost incapable of any accession to it; the very faculty of grief and terror seemed paralysed within him.

I knew, indeed, that the blood of his Saviour was sufficient to wash out all stains of guilt, however deep;—that the Lord had said, “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;” but I remembered also that these gracious promises were conditional; that it was only he who, “with a true, penitent heart,” turned to his God for mercy and forgiveness, who had “part or lot” in them; and could I believe the dying sinner before me was in that condition? I could not.

It is true we can place no limits to the Divine grace. It might be that as his soul fluttered on the very brink of eternity, prepared to take its everlasting flight, the gift of true repentance might be vouchsafed it; it might find mercy and forgiveness at that dread moment; but it was not for a weak mortal like myself to hold out such a hope.

It has always appeared to me, indeed, most unwise and cruel to the community at large to yield ready credence to the assumed compunction of each dying criminal; to suppose that a life of

sin and violence can be atoned for by a tardy, death-bed repentance. It is to throw wide the portals of heaven to all who would enter at the eleventh hour, when we are expressly assured by the blessed Saviour himself, that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

If it does not tend directly to the discouragement of virtue by sharing its rewards with the guilty, causing the upright man to say, "Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency;" it certainly removes the greatest possible check on vice, by holding out the flattering hope that it is never too late to set about the work of repentance; forgetting that we are commanded to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," which seems hardly possible to our human perceptions when the time for action is past, and our account, such as it stands at the moment, will be required to be produced "before the judgment seat of Christ."

Perhaps the most favourable sign for the eternal destiny of the miserable creature before me, and so soon to appear in the presence of his Maker, was the depth of his humiliation and abasement, that forbade him even to smite upon his breast, and cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."



But it is not for man to pry into "the deep things of God." It is not for mortal to determine the everlasting destiny of him who is now his fellow-mortal. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

If I had lived next door to a police officer, I could not have found it in my heart to disturb the dying hour of the poor guilty creature who had taken shelter under my roof; but fortunately there was no "divided duty." In the American backwoods Law and its myrmidons are but little known and slightly regarded. Long before I could have betrayed his secret to the nearest magistrate, his spirit had passed the bourn from whence there is no returning.

He had kept his gloomy secret fast locked within his breast until Nature's decline had proceeded so far as to render him safe from earthly punishment. He had for eighteen months cunningly concealed his guilt from the world; but yet his existence was rendered exquisitely wretched and miserable from a constant dread of discovery, from endeavouring to flee from the wrath of man. He was "afraid where no fear was;" and though he had baffled the pursuit of human justice, he

could not for a moment escape from the terror the thought of it inspired.

If he was so circumstanced with regard to man, how could he hope to cloke his guilt from Him “from whom no secrets are hid?”

Well, indeed, might he exclaim with the royal Psalmist, but with feelings of horror akin to despair, “Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit; or whither shall I go then from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there: if I go down to hell, thou art there also.” “If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me; then shall my night be turned to day. Yea, the darkness is no darkness with Thee, but the night is as clear as the day: the darkness and light to Thee are both alike.”

THE END.

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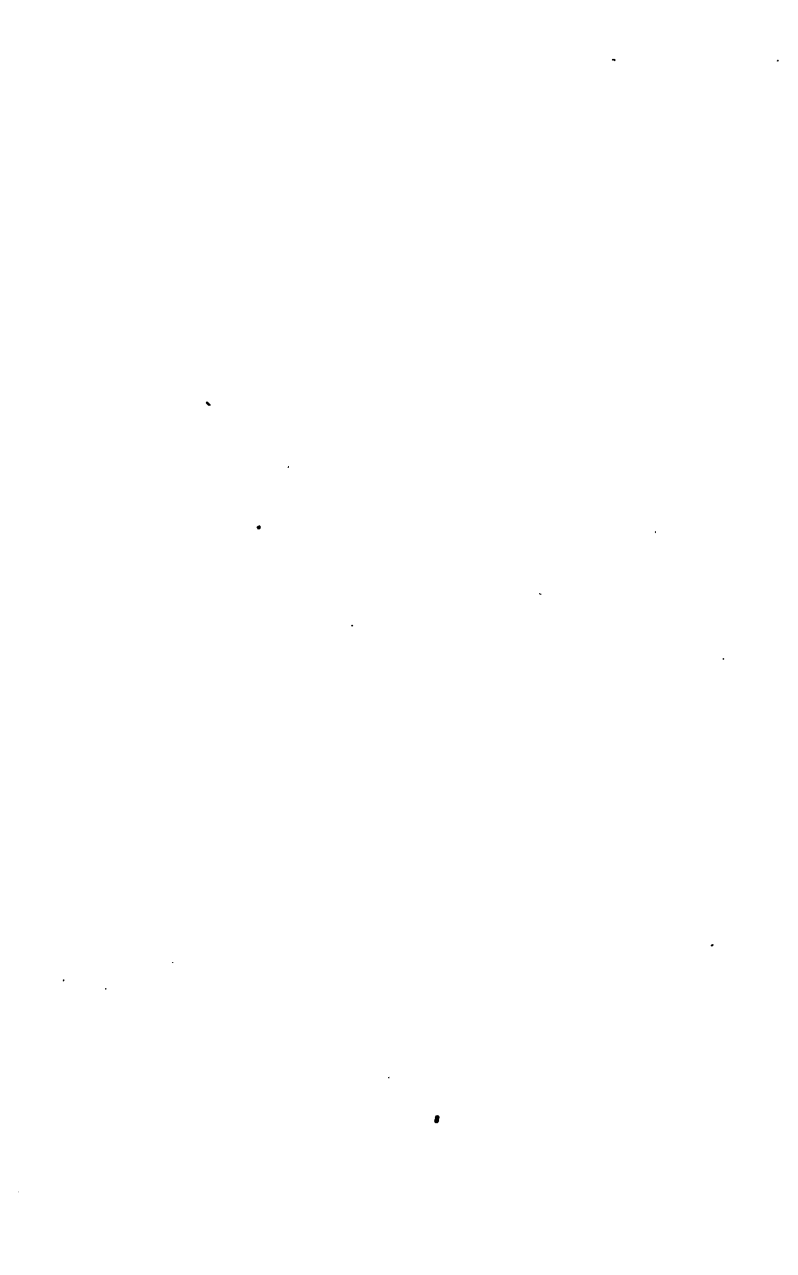
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